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CHRISTIAN COURIER
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Indonesian Christians clash with police ... p. 8

Are we truly thankful? ..... p. 14

58th year of publication

Sojourners calls for nonviolent resistance in Iraq

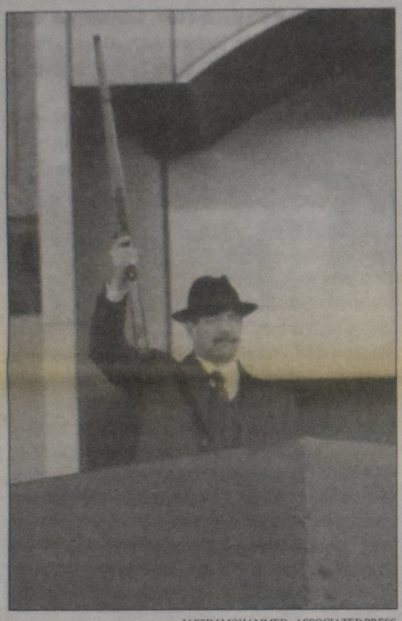
Alan Doerksen

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Is it possible to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq in a nonviolent way? *Sojourners* thinks so. The Washington-based social justice agency has responded to the impending conflict with Iraq by producing an online resource called *A World at Odds: Conscience in a Time of Terror*.

Unusual insights

A World at Odds is an online study guide that offers fresh perspectives and unusual insights into the American conflict with Iraq, and four other hot topics: the anniversary of Sept. 11; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; fundamentalism and religious diversity; and the global economy. It is available free of charge at: **www.sojo.net/terror**.

Sojourners produced the resource due to overwhelming interest in its earlier resource, *A Moral Response to Terrorism: Conscience in a Time of War*, which Sojourners published last year immediately after Sept. 11. "It was such a resounding success we thought we'd offer something similar," Sojourners magazine assistant editor Molly Marsh told *Christian Courier*. "We had a lot to say on the subject of terrorism."



JASSIM MOHAMMED - ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saddam Hussein: hardly a nonviolent leader.

In the first section of the new resource, dealing with Iraq, writers Peter Ackerman and Jack Du Vall make a strong argument that Hussein could be removed from power nonviolently. "Anyone who opposes U.S. military action to dethrone [Hussein] has a responsibility to suggest how he might otherwise be ushered out the backdoor of Baghdad," they write. "Fortunately there is an answer: civilian-based, nonviolent resistance by the Iraqi people, developed and applied in accordance with a strategy to undermine Saddam's basis of power."

It's about taking power

Such nonviolent resistance "does not typically begin by putting flowers in gun barrels and it does not end when protesters disperse to go home. It involves the use of a panoply of forceful sanctions — strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, disrupting the functions of government, even nonviolent sabotage — in accordance with a strategy for undermining an oppressor's pillars of support. It is not about making a point, it's about taking power....

"Regimes have been overthrown that had no compunction about brutalizing their opponents and denying them the right to speak their minds. How? By first demonstrating that opposition is possible, peeling away the regime's residual public and outside support, quashing its legitimacy, driving up the costs of maintaining control, and overextending its repressive apparatus. Strategic nonviolent action is not about being nice to your oppressor, much less having to rely on his niceness. It's about dissolving the foundations of his power and forcing him out. It is possible in Iraq."

The authors give examples of how such a strategy has worked in the past. For instance, in Chile, "No one doubted the willingness of Pinochet's regime, in the 1970s and early 1980s, to use terror as an instrument of repression in order to assure the regime's control: disappearances, brutal killings of dissidents, and arbitrary arrests had silenced most dissenters. But once that silence was broken in 1983 in a way that the regime could not immediately suppress — through a one-day nationwide slow-down, followed by a nighttime city-wide banging of pots and pans in Santiago — the regime was no longer able to re-establish the same degree of fear in the population, and mammoth monthly protests were soon under way." Soon after that, Pinochet lost power.

Saddam as brutal as Stalin

"While it may well be true that Saddam's rule has been as brutal as that of any dictator since Stalin, he is not, unlike the Russian tyrant, supported by an entrenched party system that can claim a higher ideological purpose," contend the authors. "His hold on power is even more reliant on personal loyalties and their reinforcement by material rewards and mortal penalties. As such, the frequent reports of his repression should be seen not only as a sign of his brutality, but as evidence of the disaffection that his capricious, personal style continues to breed: he would not have to crack down if there were no one who might be disloyal."

Taking an example from Iraq itself, the writers explain, "A few years ago, in the holy city of Karbala, when tens of thousands of Muslims gathered for an annual religious occasion, the regime sent in troops because it feared disorder or an uprising. But they were so badly outnumbered by the civilians who

See **SOJOURNERS** *page 2...*

CRWRC strengthens, renews relations with partners in development

Elise Stolte

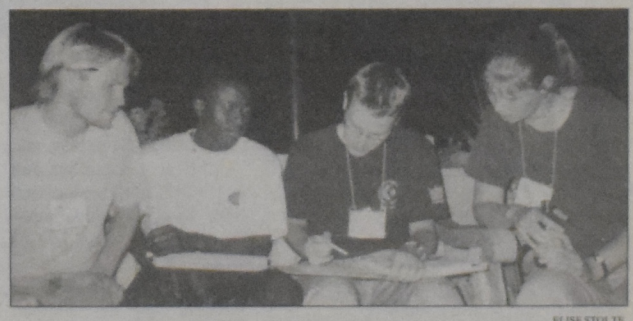
GLEN EYRIE, Colorado – Field staff, board members and partners alike returned home from the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) Assembly of WorldWide Partners with a new understanding of the nature and importance of partnerships.

"The message seems to be coming clearly that everyone is longing for a real reciprocal dialogue and relationship," explained U.S. office program leader Karl Westerhof. "We've improved a lot in understanding the personal relationships in development work but the better we do, the greater the longing."

The partnership concept, and the personal relationships at its root, provide the basic strategy for CRWRC's work. As Brenda Melles explains, CRWRC's goal is to "strengthen peoples' abilities to respond to their own needs, visions and dreams. To do this we strengthen our national partners who strengthen communities." CRWRC works primarily through nationally based non-governmental organizations that in turn work directly with people in need.

Melles works as a program consultant in Northern Uganda, primarily with the development offices of the National Anglican Church. The church has eight million members and is a major institution in every village. Melles is mainly concerned with training and guiding development workers. "Historically the Anglican Church has been very concerned with the more spiritual aspects, so the idea of holistic development is fairly new," she explains. The workers she trains are the ones directly involved in community development: water projects, micro

See **PARTNERSHIPS** *p. 3...*



ELISE STOLTE

Four of five youth representatives work together to develop a response to a challenging seminar Friday night. Left to right: Chris O'Brien, Fama Mara, Robert Brink, Gerda Kits. Not pictured: Elise Stolte

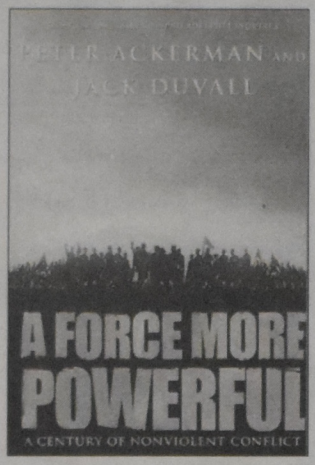
News

Sojourners calls war with Iraq 'monumental folly'

... continued from page 1

came that they were effectively encircled — a graphic display of the limitations on Saddam's repressive apparatus if it were constrained to respond to incidents in all directions from Baghdad."

Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall are co-authors of *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, the companion book to the PBS documentary of the same name.



Sanctions should end

David Cortright argues in two other pieces that United Nations weapon inspections should resume, and that sanctions against Iraq should end. "The most effective means of addressing the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction is to resume U.N. weapons inspections," writes Cortright. "Previous UN disarmament efforts were successful in eliminating Iraq's nuclear weapons program and destroying most of its long-range ballistic missiles and chemical weapons.

"To assure the return of inspectors and the completion of the U.N. disarmament mandate, the United States must drop the goal of armed regime change. Washington must also abide by the terms of Security Council resolutions, which promise the lifting of sanctions in exchange for Iraqi compliance with weapons dismantlement."

• Cortright declares that war against Iraq would be "monumental folly" for at least 10 reasons, including:

• A military campaign against Iraq could kill thousands of innocent victims, inflicting further torment on a civilian population that has already suffered severely from more than 11 years of sanctions.

• War could prompt the very use of weapons of mass destruction that the administration seeks to prevent. If pressed to the wall by a U.S. attack, Saddam Hussein might use whatever weapons he possesses — probably chemical or biological weapons — against the only targets he can hit, Israel or the advancing U.S. troops.

• The proposed war would stir further anti-American hatred, especially in Islamic nations. It would strengthen the forces of political extremism and lead to new suicide bombings against the United States and Israel.

Marsh explains this resource is meant "to get policy-makers to look at a nonviolent resolution" of the conflict with Iraq, and to help North Americans make a difference with this issue. The Sojourners agency believes sanctions against Iraq should be dropped. "They are doing far more damage" than good, Marsh asserts.

Change from within best

David Hoekema, a professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., gives a mixed review to *A World at Odds*. "One of my initial responses is I don't see it's our responsibility to remove a leader," he observes.

Examining Ackerman's and Du Vall's idea, Hoekema agrees that a regime can be removed "almost bloodlessly," as happened with the Communist government of the Soviet Union in 1991. "The economic sanctions against South Africa were a very effective force" in causing the fall of Apartheid there, as well, he notes.

If strategies for changing the regime came from within Iraq, they could work. But Hoekema criticizes the writers for offering no effective means for North Americans to communicate with Iraqis to encourage them to rebel nonviolently. Although the results are desirable, *Sojourners*' scenario does not lend itself to being controlled from outside of Iraq, contends Hoekema.

However, through a combination of sanctions and demands for weapon inspections, North Americans could encourage a regime change, he suggests. Sanctions are "a kind of pressure that needs to be part of foreign policy." But he cautions that sanctions have led to suffering, and we should try "as much as we can to relieve the suffering of the [Iraqi] people."

Don't ignore overtures

Weapons inspections "by themselves ... don't bring about a change of power," says Hoekema. But they are a solid next step, and should be pursued. He is not sure Hussein is sincere with recent promises to allow weapons inspections, but he argues that Iraq is "looking for a way to diffuse the crisis. They're clearly willing to do something. One cannot just ignore those overtures."

Hoekema agrees with Cortright's list of reasons why war against Iraq would be "monumental folly." He describes his own views as being on the border between the Just War Theory and pacifism.

Christian leaders divided on Bush's military plans

Alan Doerksen (with files from Baptist Press)

NEW YORK – Although Christian agencies such as Sojourners, Kairos and Project Ploughshares are calling for a peaceful solution to problems in Iraq, Southern Baptist leaders have spoken strongly in support of President George W. Bush's plans for a military campaign against Iraq.

On Sept. 12, Bush addressed world leaders at the United Nations, declaring that Iraq's arsenal of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons must be stopped or "risk millions of lives in a reckless gamble.... The conduct of the Iraqi regime is a threat to the authority of the United Nations, and a threat to peace. Iraq has answered a decade of U.N. demands with a decade of defiance. All the world now faces a test, and the United Nations a difficult and defining moment. Are Security Council resolutions to be honored and enforced, or cast aside without consequence? Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding, or will it be irrelevant?"

"If we fail to act in the face of danger, the people of Iraq will continue to live in brutal submission," Bush warned the UN. "The regime will have new power to bully and dominate and conquer its neighbors, condemning the Middle East to more years of bloodshed and fear."

In reaction, the leaders of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) applauded Bush's position on Iraq. "The president made a convincing and eloquent case that Saddam Hussein's ability to use weapons of mass destruction to attack and destroy Americans, our allies and his own people must be eliminated," said Richard Land, president of the ERLC.

BAPTIST PRESS

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Utterly untrustworthy

"Saddam Hussein has violated and disregarded every meaningful agreement or treaty that he has signed and has proven himself to be an utterly untrustworthy, narcissistic megalomaniac," Land said. Hussein "comes closer to meeting modern history's worst standard of extremely dangerous world leader, Adolph Hitler, than perhaps any other figure to emerge since Hitler's death in 1945."

Land, in his comments to Baptist Press, asked, "Can anyone doubt that when he has developed nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, that he will use them against America and her allies?" Bush is "absolutely correct in stating to the U.N. that if the U.N. will not take care of this problem, we must. To disarm Hussein is equivalent to preventing a desperate madman from loading the gun he already has in his hand. "The closest historical analogy is Hitler's decision to reoccupy the Rhineland in 1936 in violation of the Versailles treaty," Land recounted. "We now know that if the Allies had opposed Hitler then, the German general staff would have removed Hitler from power. The result would have been the saving of tens of millions of lives. Just so, stopping Hussein now will in all probability prevent the deaths of untold numbers of people in the future."

Canadian agencies oppose Bush

But on the Canadian side of the border, leaders of two ecumenical justice agencies – Kairos and Project Ploughshares – recently wrote to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, asking him to stand firm against Bush's plans for Iraq. In their letter, Ploughshares director Ernie Regehr and Kairos executive director Pat Steenberg wrote: "You and several of your cabinet colleagues have said publicly that any military action against Iraq must be clearly justified under international law and processed through the UN Security Council before Canada would even consider lending its support.... We strongly supported these positions and we continue to do so.

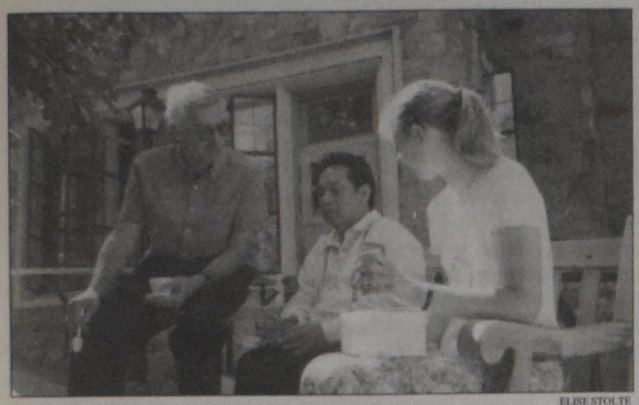
"Nevertheless, we recognize that you will be under considerable pressure to comply with President Bush's request for allied support. We urge you to remain firm in your principled stand.

"The events of September 11 last year emphasize the need for a universally accepted international order based on the rule of law. The proposed American intervention in Iraq violates that principle. Moreover we believe that such a war, one that would inevitably result in an unknown number of civilian casualties and substantial damage to Iraq's civilian infrastructure, is morally unjustifiable.

"May you be blessed both with wisdom and courage during these difficult deliberations and we urge you ... not only to refuse Canada's support for the proposed American intervention but to also dissuade President Bush from embarking on this course of action."

News/Politics

Partnerships with local agencies crucial in developing countries



ELISE STOLTE

Gerda Kits (right) and Harry Spaling (left) speak with Joe Lamigo about arranging an internship for Kits next summer.

... continued from page 1

lending and literacy training.

CRWRC works with national partners for two reasons. The first is pragmatic. As Canadian director, Wayne deJong said, "one staff person working with a partner can have a huge impact on the whole country."

To this, Melles adds, "if an expatriate comes, works and leaves, the system may all fall apart. Let's strengthen nationals because when we leave, they will still be there."

The second reason deals with CRWRC's underlying philosophy of development and understanding of the relationship between North Americans and communities overseas. "Working in partnership is a demonstration of the fact that we are all a community of faith. We all bring different gifts and as different members of the body, we strengthen each other," explains Melles.

Danger of manipulation

For Ary Vreeken, team leader in Niger, partnerships are critical. "If you don't look at partnerships, you get a colonizing system; you're in danger of manipulation," he says.

In West Africa, Vreeken works with the Association of Evangelical Christians in Niger (ACEN). The group has very little background in running an organization. Decisions are more organic, as board members walk into a meeting wearing flip-flops and torn clothes. ACEN works in an isolated, rural Islamic area, improving water lines, micro-credit and introducing new tillage technology. In this program, CRWRC's and Vreeken's role is as a mentor, concentrating on building ACEN's capacity to respond and asking the questions the group forgets.

At the assembly, many partner organizations and field staff reiterated the need to create real, equal relationships. For Vreeken, this is a recurring theme, and he isn't surprised that the issue of partnerships came up again at this conference. "In the '80s, partnerships were more of a contract for consulting. We set mutual goals and worked towards them," he explains. "But development is a two-way street; you need to recognize that you are transformed, too." This understanding of partnerships requires a personal relationship. "They want you to be there when the child gets baptized and for the funeral. It's not a Monday to Friday job."

Different cultural values

The tension and evolving nature of the partnership concept stems from different cultures and cultural values, says Melles. "Whereas partners value ideas of relationship and solidarity, North American workers are often more concentrated on results. We need to find a better way of marrying those two aspects of partnership."

Dr. Melba Padilla Maggay, a Philippine social anthropologist who specializes in culture and development, spoke to the assembly on reconciliation, unity and community. She gave her own perspective on the challenges of partnerships.

"Partnerships are difficult. It's easy when one partner defines the terms but it takes trust to negotiate." In order to have a truly equal, solid partnership, she explains, CRWRC needs to ask itself the question: "Are we prepared to measure results by the standard of the host country?"

Maggay gives an example to illustrate the difficulty and necessity behind the question. A group in the Philippines composed a development work plan to do community development in a certain village for 18 months. However, when they went to the village, they began to spend a great deal of time and made significant progress nurturing a group of young drug addicts who were not in the original plan. When the group came to her for advice, worried about not completing the planned projects, she told them to forget the plan and work where things were happening. The group ended up finding employment for the youths, changing their lives. By some measures the project would be called a failure because it did not accomplish its declared goals, but by another measure, the project was a great success because it changed lives.

It is difficult to develop standards to strictly measure the results of a partner's work, Maggay explains. "We are not able to measure the very dynamic thing that goes on in a community with a static measure. Our work is very dynamic; you can't tell what the Lord will do. In order to do community development, you need to go where things are happening. But in order to do that, you need to have confidence both ways. It's difficult to have that kind of relationship where the partner feels they have freedom without being unreliable. It takes a lot of cross-cultural sensitivity."

A strong vision needed

Vreeken agrees and says it takes a strong vision to build true partnerships. "You won't know at the beginning if you will build wheelbarrows or water wells," he observes. "You need to have partners that are supportive enough to sustain the risks."

A greater emphasis on the relationship aspect of partnerships not only changes development work, it also affects the CRWRC staff. As Vreeken describes, "We are starting to ask many more questions about the church in North America as well. We're beginning to realize we ought to have the same expectations for ourselves as we have overseas. If we expect those overseas to be actively ushering in the kingdom, we should expect ourselves to be just as focused here in North America."

Partnerships and personal relationships also enrich individuals, explained John Koster, a Canadian board member and pastor who taught in Indonesia for several years. "We need to learn to respect other cultures, learn that there are other ways to see things in almost any issue."

"This is the heart of what development is all about," related Karl Westerhof, reflecting on the recommendations brought out in the assembly. "In every AWWP [Assembly of WorldWide Partners], this has been a theme. It needs to be part of the whole process: partnership agreements, planning and evaluating, and planning regional assemblies. When we can do real partnerships across organizational and cultural boundaries, that's the real perfume of the spirit at work."

Justice requires keeping order

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

September 11 has come and gone. The first anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington was observed in the U.S. and elsewhere with solemn ceremonies of remembrance and mourning. At Redeemer University College, we marked the occasion with a special chapel service during which prayers were said and tears were shed. A year after the tragedy, most of us still have difficulty processing and accepting the reality of what occurred that dark day.

I myself have been changed by it in ways that have yet to become fully clear even to me. A quick check of my columns for the past year reveals that I mentioned or alluded to September 11 in a majority of my contributions for the subsequent 12 months. To do otherwise would have been to ignore a huge injustice perpetrated by those for whom human life is little more than fodder fuelling an ideological agenda.

We depend on political order

If there is any lesson to be learnt from September 11, it is that political order is not something to be taken for granted. Governments exist to do justice, and doing justice requires, first and foremost, the protection of the innocent from those who would harm them. Anyone who has suffered a burglary or mugging or, worse, the murder of a loved one knows from experience the fragility of the public order on which we all depend.

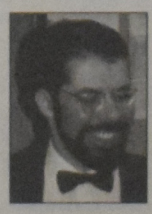
But when thousands of people are destroyed in cold blood in what can only be described as an act of war, then we all feel vulnerable. We recognize that it could just as easily have been us working in the two towers or flying from Boston to Los Angeles and never arriving at our expected destination. Justice first and foremost requires the maintenance of order, and keeping order calls for the exercise of what the apostle Paul calls the power of the sword.

Of course, most of our day-to-day activities depend, not so much on government's coercive sword-power, but on the presumed good will of our neighbors. We walk down the street, with nary a police officer in sight, confident that we do so in safety. One of the passersby we encounter could come after us with a knife or gun, but we don't really expect it. When crimes do occur, they come as a bolt from the blue. We expect to be assaulted as often as we anticipate being struck by lightning. Both are theoretically possible, but perpetual fear of these is not a mark of sanity.

Our normal routines have resumed

Some commentators have pointed out how easily we have all gone back to living our lives again. We get up in the morning, get washed and dressed, get the children ready for school, go to work, and so forth. All of our normal routines have been resumed, and for the most part we no longer think continually of those people who were more directly affected than we were by September 11.

Yet one could argue that this is part of our makeup as human beings. There is always a shadow of tragedy hanging over us, and it is never far from the edges of consciousness. After all, death comes to us and our loved ones sooner or later. However, rather than making us morose, it should instead increase our appreciation for each day in this present life, making us aware that it is not ours to grasp as a supposed entitlement. It is rather a precious gift of God for which we should be always grateful.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. His new book, **Political Visions and Illusions: A Survey and Christian Critique of Contemporary Ideologies,** *is due out from InterVarsity Press in April 2003.*

Editorial

Who's afraid of George Bush? Of Saddam Hussein?

Harry der Nederlanden

In this issue you will find quite a bit of space devoted to the question of Iraq. Should we attack: yes or no? Alan's article (page 1) looks at a proposal by Sojourners and the letter on page 7 leaves no doubt where Canadian church leaders stand. The U.S. bishops (page 5) use the "just war" standard and find that an attack on Iraq does not measure up.

Even non-pacifist Christians lean strongly away from war: war is an option but as a rule only when one is actually attacked. Nevertheless, President Bush gets strong support from most evangelical Christians in the U.S. for his insistence that Saddam Hussein must be removed from power. According to a recent poll, almost 70 per cent of Americans support a military campaign against Saddam, and almost 75 per cent consider Saddam a greater threat than Bin Laden. I read quite a number of U.S. papers on-line every day and I am surprised at the degree of support Bush gets on editorial pages. These are not places you tend to find strong support for presidents, much less Republican ones. However, most Americans do not want the U.S. to go it alone; they want Bush to wait for action by the U.N. and for support from allies.

As I write this, the papers are discussing British Prime Minister Blair's 55-page report marshaling the evidence against Saddam Hussein's regime. Those resisting Bush have nitpicked at the report and complained that there's not enough hard evidence to back up its claims that Saddam is up to no good.

I find it remarkable that people in the West are still willing to give Saddam the benefit of the doubt, while saying very dark things about Bush. One of my news services sends me articles from newspapers around the world. Some place Saddam and Bush on the same level, equally tyrannical, equally dangerous, equally fanatical; in fact, some give the lead in the dangerous nut department to Bush.

Worrisome judgment

I find that sort of judgment worrisome; it is an ethical leveling that betrays a strong will to think the worst of the U.S. Even a glance at Saddam's history shows that he belongs in a class with the worst of dictators like Hitler, Stalin, Milosovic, Ceaucescu, etc. He has rightly been described as a paranoid sadist. Like Hitler and Stalin, he has had men close to him executed on the suspicion that they might be thinking about plotting against him. He sent helicopters to spray a lethal cocktail of poisons on the Kurdish people in the north, horribly killing men, women and children.

Bush, on the other hand, is a Christian man who is not afraid to let his convictions enter into his public speeches, and we ought to respect him for that. He initiated legislation that would give a more prominent role to faith-based organizations in the public square, and he increased foreign aid by 50 per cent.

Perverse to put Bush on Saddam's level

Yet, many Christians in Canada find him "scary." I must admit that I'm not a Bush supporter either; yet, I think some of the things we say about him would be considered slanderous said about anyone else. The man does possess admirable qualities, and to put him on the same level as "the butcher from Baghdad" is perverse. He is a powerful man, yes, but unlike Saddam he is an elected official of a democracy in which there are all sorts of checks and balances. Moreover, he is surrounded by a corps of dedicated advisors. So when someone says he distrusts the U.S. administration as much as that of Iraq, to me that reflects poorly on the ethical sense of the speaker.

We don't have to trust George Bush. The American system trusts no one with all the power, and the American media are hardly deferential to presidents. (I seem to remember a couple of impeachments.) In short, I don't believe we need to paint Bush and his administration as a bunch of war-mongering crazies to express reservations about their plans to topple the Iraqi dictator. To say, for example, that it's all about American greed for oil seems to me so one-sided that it is false. America's share of oil from Iraqi sources is relatively small. Besides, a war would threaten the source of oil more than peace, a fact not lost on Europe.

I won't, however, try to paint a picture of Bush as a model of the Christian magistrate. My heart wouldn't be in it. But I do think our opposition to Bush's foreign policy ought to issue from respect and love for America. It ought also to demonstrate love for the people of Iraq. In neither case am I talking about warm, fuzzy feelings. If we love one another, we also desire justice for one another.

It galls Bush and most Americans that this ruthless dictator has been able to provide shelter to terrorists and to defy the international community for more than 10 years, while he continues to work at developing weapons that will one day threaten the entire region and beyond.

Gullible to believe Saddam has changed

I know, many will say that hasn't been proven. Knowing what we know about Saddam, however, you have to be a bit gullible to believe he has changed his ways and that he has suddenly become law-abiding. Since he has already jerked the U.N. around for more than a decade, I have scant hope for the course advocated by the Canadian Council of Churches – diplomacy and negotiations. Saddam doesn't negotiate; he manipulates. Meanwhile he does what he wills.

If Saddam had allowed the U.N. inspectors into his country long ago, things would be much better for his people today. If Saddam were more concerned for the welfare of his people instead of building up his army and his power, life would be much better in Iraq. To imply, as the CCC letter does, that the plight of the Iraqi people can be blamed on those who insist that Saddam observe the conditions imposed by the U.N. strikes me as twisted logic.

When Saddam flouted international law and invaded his neighbor Kuwait only to aggrandize himself, he lost the right to be considered a legitimate ruler. When America and its allies trounced him, that should have been the end of his regime. They practiced restraint for the sake of the Iraqi people, however, and, to preserve stability in the region, allowed Saddam to remain in power — on the condition that he not develop weapons of mass destruction and allow the U.N. to enforce that condition.

It was not at all remiss of Bush to remind the U.N. that it has been derelict in its duty. Keeping a short rein on Saddam is not kowtowing to the U.S. It's protecting the people in the region, including those under his rule, such as the Kurds. Some American commentators believe that the death of Saddam would be celebrated by most Iraqis. Maybe. If he died of natural causes. Not if it is done by the kind of American bombing we saw in Afghanistan.

Let's tell Bush, "Listen, George, we realize that Saddam is up to no good, and we thank you for reminding us of our responsibility toward the Iraqi people and its neighbors. We agree that for their good, to promote peace in the Middle East and to protect our own security, we must keep a closer eye on him. But there are just too many ways a military attack on him can backfire and make things worse for everyone.

"The War on Terrorism, however, cannot be extended to every country where there's tyranny or where there may be terrorist cells. That would be to give you a blank cheque to strike wherever you please. No country may have such authority. It's contrary to the rule of law.

"Besides, even the U.S. treasury has limits, and there's so much left to do just to make life possible in many countries. A great many people in the world are so concerned with feeding their children and surviving AIDS, they give little thought to the benefits of democracy. There are better things to spend our money on than bombs.

"Ultimately, George, the War on Terrorism must become a war for the hearts and minds of people. When they see a U.S. plane overhead, their hearts must be filled not with terror but with hope."

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Letters/News

Different degrees of socialism

In his article on the World Council of Churches the editor stated, "Wherever socialism has been implemented, it has done more damage than the free-market economy, to people as well as to the environment." (CC, Sept. 9, 2002: p. 3). One aspect of Christian journalism is responsibility. I would regard this unqualified statement as irresponsible.

Christian socialist blazed the way

Socialism comes in a variety of ways. Sweden has fared quite well under a long socialist government. After World War II the Netherlands and Germany have had several socialist governments and have done quite well. Britain's Tony Blair is a relief from the callous capitalism of Margaret Thatcher. In Canada, Saskatchewan with a Christian socialist as leader blazed the way to social responsible government.

Admittedly, socialist governments have been far from perfect — and the same can be said for capitalist governments. Sure, communism (if it can be equated with socialism) has caused much unrelieved damage. But equating socialism with communism is irresponsible; even equating earlier socialism with recent socialism is ignoring the variety and evolution. Such ignorance would probably also equate Kuyperian capitalism with Thatcherism, Reaganism or Mulroneyism.

The editor's statement not only blackens governments, but also unions. And while I disagree with the antagonistic stance unions often take in regard to management, many people can be thankful to the unions for helping millions live an easier life.

How can one get to a third way (as the editor hopes) if the first two ways are not represented adequately and fairly?

Bert den Boggende,
Brooks Alta.

Mr. Den Boggende is perhaps right that I should have qualified my statement more carefully. His use of the term "socialism" is softer than mine. I don't regard a government that functions happily with all the institutions of capitalism and private property in place as socialist. It is simply a welfare state, different from that of Canada only in degree.

True socialist states in which the government assumes management of major industries have a bad record. To use socialism in this way is more precise than using it of governments that support a lot of social programs.

Since I contrast socialist and free-market economies, I thought my usage was clear enough. None of the countries Mr. Den Boggende mentions have, to the best of my knowledge, done away with the free-market economy.

However, people do use the word in different ways, just like the word "liberalism," which can mean almost opposite things depending on the context. Just to set Mr. Den Boggende's mind at ease, I don't equate "Kuyperian capitalism" with any of the options he so graciously proffers.

I am sorry I caused Mr. Den Boggende so much confusion.

Harry der Nederlanden

Most Albertans support Kyoto

The Kyoto Protocol will be ratified this fall, five years after its creation and 10 years after it was conceived in Rio in 1992, at the first world summit. Our premier is against ratification. He says the time lines are too restrictive. What has he been doing since 1992? Will he wait till 2011 to start?

We all know that giant American Oil Companies are opposed to ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, just like they are against mandatory clean-up of abandoned gas stations. The citizens of Alberta and all of Canada support Kyoto, just like they want contaminated sites which once housed gas stations cleaned up.

PanCanadian stated that they going ahead with their $5 billion dollar projects regardless, of Kyoto's ratification. Shell says they are prepared to meet Kyoto's requirements, and Suncor and their union back the ratification of Kyoto. The majority of Albertans support Kyoto. I believe that Albertans do not want to leave their children a province that looks like the industrial section of Detroit, or the deserts of Texas and Saudi Arabia.

The boy who cried: 'Wolf'

Our provincial government would have you believe that oil companies will abandon oilfields of a stable government for the oilfields of more volatile governments. Are we to believe that the U.S. wants to be dependent on OPEC countries for their energy? I do not think so. Every day more companies are announcing their intention of ratifying Kyoto. Many governors in the U.S. are supporting Kyoto, and are actively enacting legislation that would meet the requirements of the protocol.

I think we have heard the same arguments many times before. Industry will leave us for other countries if we go ahead with: Unemployment Insurance, Health Care Premiums, WCB, Free Trade, GST, Income Tax, Business Taxes, Provincial Sales Taxes, Minimum Wage, Charter of Rights, and so on. Mr. Klein, have you heard the story about the boy who cried: "Wolf"?

The almighty dollar can blind many people to the realities of life, and I hope that it will not blind the politicians to the wishes of the people. People want our government to ratify Kyoto; people want to clean up the environment, and people want our government to do their jobs, not for themselves so much as for their children and their children's children.

Garfield Marks
Red Deer, Alta.

Zimbabwe's Catholic bishops plead for food aid to be de-politicized

HARARE, Zimbabwe (ENI) — Zimbabwe's Roman Catholic bishops have urged their government to "quickly de-politicize" the procurement and distribution of food to thousands of starving villagers in the famine-hit southern African nation.

The call from the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference coincided with complaints, mainly by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, that the government's ongoing food distribution program favors supporters of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF).

For the sake of the nation

"For the sake of the nation and its survival, we urge the government to quickly de-politicize the procurement and distribution of food and put in place controls to minimize the acquisition of food by threats or any other means, corruption and exploitation," the Catholic bishops said in a pastoral letter published September 7.

Separately, the main governing body of the Lutheran World Federation, which concluded its annual meeting Sept. 17 in Wittenberg, Germany agreed "to urgently draw public attention to the serious humanitarian crisis in southern Africa." The LWF council expressed "alarm at the unacceptable delay" in international aid to Zimbabwe but it also denounced "any use of humanitarian assistance as a political tool."

The LWF general secretary, Dr. Ishmael Noko, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), told journalists at the closing press conference of the eight-day session of the council that "natural disasters" were one reason for the problem in Zimbabwe, but "another is political mismanagement which can be avoided."

In their pastoral letter the nine Catholic bishops called on the government to accommodate churches and other organizations able to provide food aid, and they deplored unscrupulous business people selling scarce basic commodities at exorbitant prices.

"Unfair hoarding of necessary commodities in order to create artificial shortages and raise prices to unmanageable levels for ordinary citizens is deplorable," the bishops said.

In the run-up to the country's presidential election last March, the government barred charities and other non-governmental organizations from distributing food except through government channels. Zimbabwe is experiencing serious food shortages triggered by severe drought afflicting most of southern Africa. In addition, government-backed invasions of commercial farms in the country have sabotaged food production, undermining the country's once-thriving agricultural industry.

In the latest assessment of the food crisis threat to six southern African countries, the United Nations Secretary-General's special envoy for humanitarian needs, James Morris, said the number of Zimbabweans in need of food aid had increased by 11.6 per cent to 6.7 million from six million in May.

"The humanitarian crisis is not only devastatingly real," Morris said, "it is also worsening faster than originally projected.

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Canadian churches cry NO to Iraq war

Churches urge PM to pursue 'genuine' negotiation, resist pressures for invasion

(TORONTO) Sixteen prominent church leaders — representing a broad spectrum of Canadian church denominations, as well as the ecumenical peace coalition Project Ploughshares and the inter-church justice coalition KAIROS — joined together to send an urgent message to Jean Chrétien Sept. 25, imploring the Prime Minister to resist growing "pressure" in favor of "a new invasion of Iraq."

A time for intense diplomacy

"This is a time for intense diplomacy and face-to-face negotiations, not for missiles and high-altitude bombing. This is especially a time for multilateralism," states a joint letter signed by Bishop Jacques Berthelet, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Archdeacon Jim Boyles, General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Right Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy, Moderator of the United Church of Canada, along with leaders of 15 other churches and church coalitions.

The churches warn against supporting any United Nations resolution that makes it virtually impossible for Iraq to comply with demands. Such a UN resolution "would be a mere cover for an invasion that might be multinational but would still be unjust," states the letter.

The Canadian church leaders explain that their decision to send a joint letter to the Prime Minister was prompted by pleas from colleagues in the Middle East to "speak and act against the threat of another war."

Several Canadian churches have a long and close relationship with the Middle East Council of Churches, which includes churches in Iraq. Together they have been vocal in denouncing the devastating impact of eleven years of international sanctions against Iraq, sanctions they say have not weakened the oppressive grip of the Saddam Hussein regime but instead hurt ordinary and innocent Iraqi civilians. Canadian church personnel are also engaged in humanitarian relief efforts in Iraq.

Acknowledging that many in Iraq "long and pray for a regime change," the church leaders emphasize it is "all the more striking" that "voices from that country and region urge us not to bring about a new regime by means of a violent invasion from outside."

Instead the church leaders call on Prime Minister Chrétien to ensure the Canadian government supports a negotiated, peace-building approach "consistent with international law and taking the common good of Iraq's people as its starting point."

"We do not understand how a cataclysm can be averted without genuine negotiation," continue the church leaders. "Furthermore, negotiations cannot open minds and possibilities if the universe is divided beforehand into two camps, the good and the evil, with 'our' side being only good. Such an approach, besides running counter to a Christian sense of sin and grace, reveals an arrogance which can only deepen anger and hostility."

The church leaders conclude by urging the Prime Minister to press all countries to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions — since "Iraq is not the only country that stands in violation of them" — and to reconsider onerous compensation obligations imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War.

Economic hope for Iraqis

"There must be economic hope for Iraqi society, for without it Iraqis will not recover the energy they will need to rebuild their country — nor to change their government," counsel the church leaders. "The world should not repeat the errors of the settlement imposed on Germany after World War I."

Among the signers are:

- Bishop Jacques Berthelet, C.S.V., President, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops;
- Right Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy, Moderator, United Church of Canada;
- Archdeacon Jim Boyles, General Secretary, Anglican Church of Canada;
- Rev. J. Mark Lewis, Moderator, 128th General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in Canada;
- His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto;
- Rev. Raymond Schultz, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- Dan Nighswander, General Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada;
- Right Rev. Seraphim, Bishop of Ottawa and Canada, Orthodox Church in America;
- Rev. F. Tom Rutherford, Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada;
- Rev. Dr. Kenneth Bellous, Executive Minister, Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec;
- Rev. Siebrand Wilts, Stated Clerk, Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America;
- Metropolitan Archbishop Wasyly (Fedak), Primate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada;
- Dr. Walter Pitman, O.Ont, O.C., Chair, Project Ploughshares
- Jane Orion Smith, Chair, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

Family as religion

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman

While visiting the second largest Mormon temple in the world in Los Angeles, I came upon this statue entitled "The Family." Besides asserting the eternal nature of the family unit, the plaque underneath said: "This statue is placed near the entrance to the temple as a tribute to the exalted concept of family brought to the world through the restored gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Mormons do not share the Bible with us as God's unique word to us about Jesus Christ. If they did, they would know that the faith in God declared by Jesus does not focus on the family. In fact, "Focus on the Family" may subtly confuse people about what Christ's passion was all about. This is especially important to me as I work with a whole population of people who are far from their families — families that do not look anything like the statue you see in the accompanying photograph.

PETER SCHUURMAN

The Family, *a statue outside the Mormon Temple, Los Angeles.*

Jesus not a family man

The Jesus of the Bible was not a family man. He did not get married, and he did not have children. In fact, he said, "Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37) and "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother," (Mark 3:35). For Jesus, the water of baptism held stronger than the blood of heredity in God's covenant family. Jesus' passion was for the poor, the sick, and the outcast. He did not institute "the exalted concept of family."

Consider another religion. I remember a philosophy conference here at Brock that was comparing Confucianism and Christianity. Confucianism sees life in a series of concentric circles of diminishing responsibility, with the inner circles being one's immediate family and then working outward to extended family, village, and then foreigners on the far outside. The closer someone was to you, the more concern you were obligated to show to the person.

One philosopher explained how the Jesus ethic was different, for Jesus not only gave his life for his friends, but for his enemies — for the very strangers who tortured and killed him. In fact, his death initiated the redemption of the entire cosmos from the clutches of sin and death. Christian ethics then, ought to widen our circle of compassion to include everyone, not to mention give us a certain reverence for every part of the creation.

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this," says James 1:27, "to look after widows and orphans in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." False religion seeks security for itself, but true religion opens its doors to the fringes. Students who have left their family of origin and have not yet started their own families are in a similar space. If religion is about exalting families, students are second class citizens.

To be found in a nuclear family is not salvation. Some families can be private hells of emotional pain, and we must place our hope in greater things. God in Christ renews individuals and families by bringing love where there is alienation, joy where there is despair, and peace where there is friction and conflict. Where God's Spirit moves, we see life renewed.

Healthy family as a gift

A good, loving family is like great wealth. In one sense, it is dangerous, as it may usurp our dependence and trust in God and become an idol in his place. On the other hand, a healthy family is a tremendous gift that can fill our lives with love and laughter and give us a special strength that enables us to be faithful followers of Christ, opening doors to those without a happy home. A grace-filled home may be one of the greatest riches that we can have, and to experience such blessing must flood our hearts with a gratitude that extends itself outward — towards the fringes of the circles of safety we nurture for ourselves. If Jesus exalted anything, he exalted this kind of radical love.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Development News

Partners of CRWRC meet with staff and board to plan for future

Elise Stolte

GLEN EYRIE, Colorado – A reinspired hope and vision emerged from the week-long gathering of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's Assembly of World-Wide Partners.

Representatives of CRWRC's field staff, partner organizations, North American staff and board members met in Glen Eyrie, Colorado in early September for five days of encouragement and learning.

Atmosphere of openness

In an atmosphere of openness, participants spent their days reexamining what it means to do development work, sharing experiences and making recommendations to the board.

This year's conference marks the third organization-wide gathering, explained Canadian director, Wayne deJong. "CRWRC needed a much more participatory process in its planning in order to involve all the stakeholders," he said. "We had become a bit insular."

The assembly meets every three years with the three-fold task of gathering input, building community, and strengthening technical skills.

"It's important for us to get together because ultimately we are all one community," deJong explains, "I feel that the sense of community is really building."

ELISE STOLTE

Rev. Mbonambi Khuzwayo, a national CRWRC staff in South Africa.

One particularly important connection is between the board members and field staff. "We're really trying to build a strong connection between staff and board members," said deJong. "If the board members understand how it works, they can do a better job in their roles of governance and promotion."

Canadian Board member, Rev. John Koster, appreciates this function. "It's a chance for me to get a global perspective of what's going on in CRWRC," he explained. "When you meet people face to face, you can share fears and concerns. You can get a real look at the compassionate nature of partners and staff."

After the assembly, Koster and other board members will return to their constituencies, full of the stories of the front line workers. So armed, their task is both large and important. "The vast majority of our members in the CRC are unaware as to the real nature and impact of the work we do around the world."

Most board members also have the chance to learn what CRWRC does first hand by traveling overseas at least once in their six-year tenure.

Expensive conference

Brenda Melles, a North American CRWRC staff member working in Uganda, raises questions about the cost of bringing so many people together from around the world. "It's expensive and hard to justify," she said. However, she emphasized the importance of AWWP [the Assembly of World-Wide Partners] in connecting field workers to North American communities. Communicating with the constituencies in North America is a high priority, she explained. "For someone to really escape from their poverty, it will take a change in the global system. We need to expose and help people understand the reality in Uganda. We need to learn together. If this assembly can do that, it's a good thing."

However, communication between North America and staff overseas isn't the assembly's only purpose. Staff and partner organizations share techniques both formally through sessions of best practices, and informally at every meal and break. "People are always talking together," deJong explains.

The interaction is encouraging for many participants.

"When people are coming from all over the world to share their experiences, it makes the great commission a reality," explained Rev. Mbonambi Khuzwayo, a national CRWRC staff in South Africa. "This to me is a symbol of hope that the gospel can be preached all over the world."

Melles also found encouragement in this assembly, in meeting people and hearing their stories. She sees a common sense of renewal and vision among all groups: overseas and North American staff, partners and board members.

"Being reminded that there is a community in North America that cares about the work CRWRC is doing, that's encouraging," she says, describing the many North Americans who have told her they are praying for her. But perhaps most convincing is her confession that follows. In the face of all the hurt she has seen in war-torn Northern Uganda, in the face of the crushing trade systems that threaten to undo any steps she may accomplish, she can still stand among this community of like-minded believers and say, "I believe that people of faith, who are convicted and live out their convictions can change the world."

Youth lend their idealism to CRWRC

Elise Stolte

GLEN EYRIE, Colorado – Striving for a full diversity of voices, for the first time CRWRC invited five youth participants to their Assembly for World-Wide Partners in Colorado.

"We need to have the voice of younger people," explained Matt Van Geest, CRWRC Canadian staff member and originator of the idea. "There are different ways to see things and the more viewpoints we have the better. I think it takes their idealism to push the agenda a bit further sometimes."

After a lengthy application process last spring, a committee chose Robert Brink from Edmonton, Alberta; Gerda Kits from Toronto, Ontario; Elise Stolte from Calgary, Alberta; Fama Mara from Sierra Leone; and Chris O'Brien from Farmington, Michigan. Of these five, O'Brien is finishing his last year at Calvin College and currently interning in Haiti with CRWRC. The other four attend or recently attended The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta.

The group's involvement was well received, said Van Geest, adding that he hopes to repeat and increase the number of youth participants next year. "I and others from CRWRC were impressed with the level of engagement they showed. I was afraid their involvement might be seen as a token gesture, but was impressed with how seriously people took it."

Encouragement was a highlight

For the youth, the highlight seemed to lie in a different area, not in what they shared but in what they learned and the encouragement they received.

"Everyone seemed to really value what we said, but I found that I was learning so much it was hard to give any suggestions," said Kits. "However, I loved being in a setting where everyone was so passionate for justice and where you know things are happening. As a student, often things become very theoretical and you can end up thinking things are never going to change. It's encouraging to see work being done."

O'Brien agreed: "This is the expression I've found for my faith. Being surrounded by people who are passionate for development and justice — it's renewing just to soak it in."

Whichever aspect of the exchange they valued, all agreed it should be repeated. "The message is something students need to hear and need to take back to their communities," Kits explained. In the following months, all five students will be working towards that goal, sharing with their home communities and trying to incorporate the lessons they learned into their lives.

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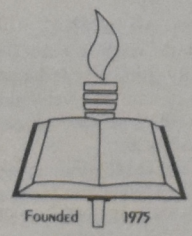

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Church

Indonesian Christians prevent police attempt to arrest pastor

Alex Buchan

LONDON, England (Compass) — Blocking streets, forming a cordon around a church, and preventing a police helicopter from landing were just three tactics employed by scores of Christians in Tentena, in central Sulawesi, when police came on September 3, to arrest the Rev. Rinaldy Damanik. The arrest was prevented, and the Rev. Damanik left Tentena on September 9 for Jakarta of his own accord, only to be arrested there two days later, sources said.

The drive for peace

As the secretary-general of the Synod of the GKST (Christian Church of Central Sulawesi), the Rev. Damanik is a key Christian leader in the drive for peace in central Sulawesi. He was a signatory of the December 20, 2001, Malino I peace pact between Christian and Muslim leaders, and he has worked tirelessly to put a stop to the violence that has left over 2,000 dead in two years among the two communities.

But police issued a warrant for his arrest in August on charges of carrying illegal arms in his car, and for "provoking communal unrest." The circumstances of the charge are suspicious, however.

According to a letter to the police from the Rev. Damanik, the incident began when he was surrounded by a Muslim mob baying for blood. Police intervened to escort him from the car. When he returned, the arms were in the car. Rev. Damanik refused to respond to two arrest warrants on these grounds, claiming the charge was illegally constituted.

INDONESIA FOR CHRIST PHOTOS

A burnt church in Poso, Tentena, Indonesia.

Christian opinion is inclined to protect Damanik from arrest because fears are running high. Muslim Laskar Jihad forces are poised to make another attack on the Christian stronghold of Tentena. The city, with its population of 28,000, is swollen with refugees from the surrounding area. Damanik has been particularly outspoken at the government's failure to arrest anyone for perpetrating atrocities after the Malino I agreement. He is also a major source of news on the whereabouts of the mysterious and violent Laskar Jihad forces.

Thorn in the side

"He is a target because he is a thorn in the side of the government, who are doing far too little to stop this conflict from escalating again," said a Tentena Christian leader.

Christian leaders refused to appear at an August 10 peace conference in Palu organized by the government, citing "security and transportation difficulties." In reality, they are thought to be furious at the government's unwillingness to remove the Muslim extremists, who have camped in central Sulawesi despite being told to leave.

The violence worsened last month. On Monday, August 12, the village of Sepe was burned to the ground for the second time in eight months. Three days later, two other villages, Taiiwan and Manyomba, were burned. In Manyomba village, extremists strangled a three-year-old boy.

Even more worrying, gunfire was heard at the Ranononcu bridge, which is strategic to the defense of Tentena. In November 2001, Laskar Jihad forces were barely beaten back from taking the bridge and accomplishing their promised genocide of Christians in Tentena.

Astonishing provocation

According to a well-placed source in Tentena, "It's very tense here. Rumors abound that government forces have joined Laskar Jihad, and Demanik's position is an ambivalent one too. On the one hand, it is not good to defy an arrest order, on the other, it is indicative that many Christians simply feel that to cooperate with the government right now is to give in to the Muslim extremists, who are not being restrained."

He added, "Nevertheless, in this situation, it is an act of astonishing provocation to proceed with his arrest."

According to many, the peace process itself is flawed because the main perpetrators of the violence — outside armies like Laskar Jihad — were not signatories to the agreement. Mr. Prasetyohadi, a researcher in conflict transformation in Jakarta, wrote, "Peace talks that do not include the great actors in a conflict are meaningless. It is worse if the signatories are expected to implement the agreement and stop armed attacks."

Sporadic violence continues

Meanwhile in the Maluku Islands, Indonesia's other troubled area of Christian-Muslim conflict, life is gradually returning to normal. Recent reports suggest there is more trade back on Ambon's city streets, but sporadic violence continues.

In the Tobelo area of northern Halmahera Island, an unknown force of Muslim extremists attacked the village of Wari on August 7, setting scores of homes on fire. Christians retaliated by attacking some Muslims in the village of Gorua, and a corpse was found. Police finally intervened and the area is said to be quiet again.

A village in Gorua, Indonesia on fire.

Jungle trek leads missionaries to safety after massacre in Congo

Cedric Pulford

LONDON, England (ENI) — More than 700 people who took to the jungle after a massacre at their medical compound in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo have reached safety, mission sources in London have learned.

The party of doctors, nurses and patients from Nyankunde made a dramatic trek of about 170 kilometres through savannah and dense forest to reach the town of Oicha, losing no member of the group on the journey.

Among the group is a 75-year-old Canadian missionary, Marianne Baisley, who was said to have refused evacuation on a light plane that took other expatriates out of Nyankunde on September 13 after the medical facilities were destroyed in tribal fighting.

Survivors reported that at least 1000 people died in eight days of inter-tribal strife, triggered by the presence nearby of gold, diamonds and coltan, a valuable ore used in mobile phones (cell phones).

The turmoil was described in a refugee report from Oicha as "a long agony."

Nyankunde is a major Christian centre where at least eight mission bodies work. The hospital, orthopaedic centre, pharmacy, schools, churches and the Christian IPASC (Institut Pan-Africain de Sante Communautaire/Pan-African Institute of Community Health) constituting the medical compound were ransacked.

The only water pipe supplying the compound was severed in the fighting, and cholera has now broken out in the region.

'Nothing at all is left'

Although the medical party has reached safety, 2000 people are understood to remain at Nyankunde where, according to one refugee, "nothing at all is left."

There were conflicting reports about the fate of Salomon Isereve, principal chaplain at the Evangelical Medical Centre (CME), who was reportedly tortured and burned alive. Another church worker, Henri Basimake, HIV/Aids co-ordinator for the Anglican province of Congo, was shot dead after returning from a conference in Nairobi.

Medical personnel, students and patients were not spared in the violence.

Patricia Nickson, the dean of the IPASC, which is supported by the London-based Church Mission Society, was away from Nyankunde at the time attending to duties at a hospital in England.

She told ENI that despite the security risk she wanted to go to Oicha to join the refugees.

"If I am killed there are lots of other people to carry on, but while I'm here I'm responsible for an institute," Nickson said.

Outside forces were behind tribal warfare

She believed that outside forces were behind the tribal warfare, saying that the tribes, which include the Ngiti (Lendu) and Hema, had co-existed in the area for centuries.

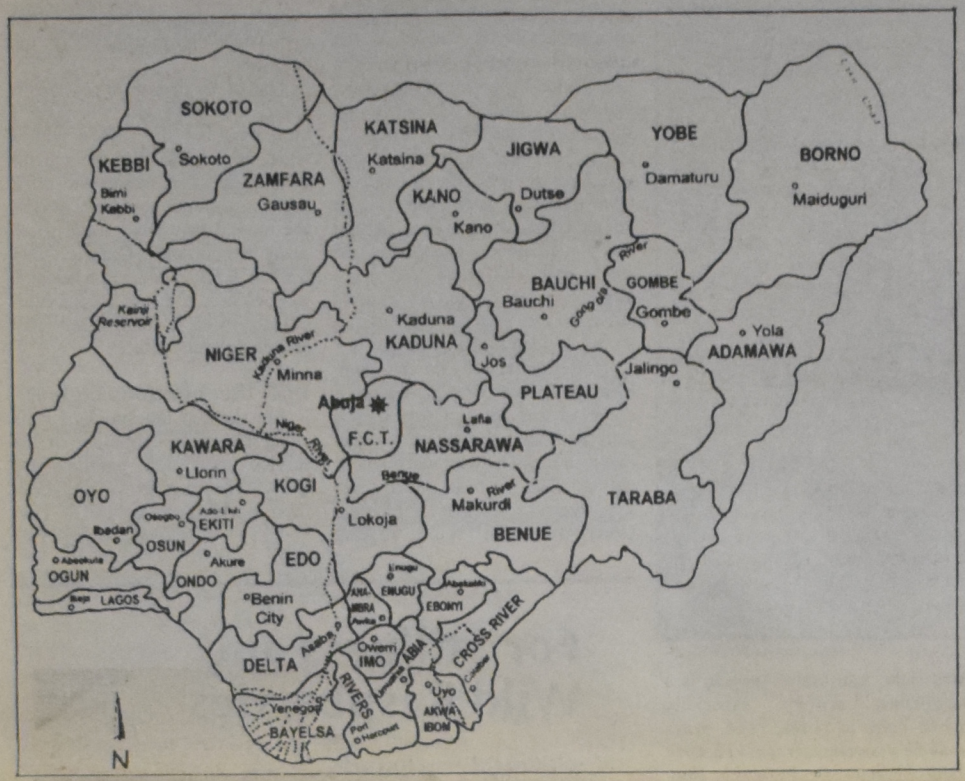
The Church Mission Society, an evangelical Anglican group, has a long, historic association with the region. In the 1870, it supplied the first Christian missionaries to reach Uganda, across Lake Albert from north-eastern Congo.

At Nyankunde the mission society supports community health projects while other mission groups help to improve clinical medical facilities.

A Church Mission Society spokesman told ENI: "The priorities are to restore water and food at Nyankunde, followed by a restoration of the valuable work there and a long-term solution to unrest in the region."

Church

Church bombing in Jos, Nigeria, heightens fears, tension



Christian leaders say the government of the northern Nigerian state of Kano (see map above) has demolished more than 20 church buildings recently.

Harry der Nederlanden (with stories from Compass and Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

JOS, Nigeria – The Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), located in a suburb of Jos, was rocked by an explosion on Sept. 11, the anniversary of the terrorist attack on America.

Rev. Haruna Dauda, senior minister of the church, told Compass that he was in the pastor's residence close to the cathedral when the explosion took place. "When we heard the explosion, we rushed out to see what was happening, only to discover that the explosion had destroyed a part of the church building, the roof of the church and the vestry. In addition, we saw thick black smoke covering the entire church," he said. Although the roof and parts of the church's interior were damaged, no injuries were reported in the incident.

Blast heightens tensions

The blast did, however, heighten fears and tensions, and threatened to spark more violence in an area that has already seen hundreds killed and thousands displaced by religious conflict between Muslims and Christians. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), in fact, reports that over 1,000 people have been killed in over 80 villages in Plateau State this summer. Local Hausa-Fulani Muslims, helped by extremists from Niger and Chad, have reportedly been raiding the villages and mutilating and dismembering their victims.

Most victims Christians

Most of the victims, according to CSW, are from the Tarok tribe, indigenous to the region and predominantly Christian. The Hausa-Fulani, who are almost all Muslim, have migrated here from the north, and the attacks are thought to be part of a concerted attempt to create a Muslim majority in Plateau State before the upcoming elections.

In spite of a peace summit held near the end of the summer, the attacks on Christians have continued. Over 100,000 people have fled to refugee camps around Jos and they are suffering from lack of food and medicine.

Rev. John Audu, general secretary of COCIN, told Compass news that his denomination has lost five ministers and 35 members, as well as properties worth over $10 million, including 25 church buildings in Jos alone.

Meanwhile, Kano, one of the 12 northern states that adopted sharia, the Islamic legal code, three years ago, is systematically demolishing Christian churches in the state.

Rev. Dr. Joseph Fadipe, Chairman of the Kano state chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria, said on August 13 that government officials told them there are too many churches in the state and that they plan to demolish half of them.

"The government's complaint against Christians was that there were too many churches in Kano and Muslims in the city are not happy with the development," Rev. Fadipe said. "They are demanding that we church leaders give the government approval to reduce the number of churches by 50 per cent.

"We told the government officials that we can never endorse the demolition of churches. We told them that we would rather have all churches in the state demolished than to support the demolition of some."

Meetings ended in deadlock

Christian leaders say the Kano government has already demolished more than 20 church buildings, following implementation of Islamic law, or sharia. Church leaders have met with government representatives on three occasions to discuss the matter, but the meetings ended in deadlock.

When sharia was adopted three years ago, the government of Kano had promised that Christians would not be affected. However, Christian parents of 500 students of the Government Girls' Secondary School in the city of Bauchi ask why their children have been expelled by the Islamic state government following clashes last May between the school's Muslim and Christian students. The religious crisis, which resulted in the deaths of three Christian students and the school's closure, was ignited when Muslim students attacked their Christian counterparts over religious disagreements.

Christian students expelled

Alhaji Abdumalik Mahmoud, Bauchi state deputy governor, justified the expulsion of the students on technical grounds, claiming it was intended "to check illegal admissions in the school." Parents of the students, however, say that their daughters were expelled because they are Christians.

In another northern state, Zamfara, news that the government is importing weapons in preparation for a full-scale jihad has triggered a mass exodus of Christians from the state. Rev. Moses Ogbodo of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria reported that almost all churches in the state are empty now.

The governor of Zamfara claimed that he is buying weapons just to fight crime. However, the state police say that the weapons were not purchased for them; moreover, according to the state's police commissioner, the governor does not have the authority to make such purchases.

Rev. Ogbodo explained that the implementation of sharia by the state, which has led to the harassment of Christians and the destruction of church buildings, had already prompted many people to leave.

Last year the governor of Zamfara proposed the formation of a Muslim army for the north to help protect Muslims and to promote Islam.

Food..? For Thought..??

When the *bonding* mortar is *missing* between the brick, block, or stone, the building will be uninhabitable.

Likewise, if the *bonding* of total open heart-to-heart communion is *missing*, we will be like varying sized, colourful marbles rolling about, instead of a cluster of grapes on a *living vine*.

Self-discovery of Imprisoned Persons

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Opinion/Poetry

Walking to work and listening

NEERLANDIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Harry der Nederlanden

There aren't a great many of us in our society so privileged as to be able to walk to work. Here in St. Catharines an awful lot of people have to drive not just across town but the length of the Niagara peninsula to get to their jobs in Hamilton, Mississauga and Toronto. After our move, I can easily walk to work in about 50 minutes.

Early morning marches

My father used to walk about a mile from our house in Beverly to get to the tail end of the Edmonton transit system and then sit in the bus for almost an hour to get to his job at the other end of town. We didn't own a car; otherwise, I'm sure he would have driven, as most of us do nowadays. It would have cut his travel time down to less than a quarter of what it was.

But I still recall those early morning marches fondly, walking side-by-side with my father to catch the city bus. Of course, I only went along in the summertime or Saturdays. Sometimes Rev. Tamminga would already be in his study, and we'd wave as we strode by carrying our lunches. Perhaps if I'd been forced to do it every day in the dead of winter, my memories wouldn't be quite so fond.

Sunny side of the street

I don't walk to work every day now either. My oldest daughter, who lives in Toronto, does; it takes her over an hour. Usually I'm in too much of a hurry to get there. Silly, really, because many of those commuting by car will spend that much time or more behind the wheel.

In the summer I pick the streets with the most shade, but this September morning the shade is chilly and I either pick the side of the street without shade or pick a street with few trees. That's not easy in St. Catharines. Most sidewalks are canopied by maples of various kinds. Even on this cool morning, however, I turn up the street with the towering silver maples. As I pass beneath them and glance skyward through the leaves, they always bestow a kind of benediction on my day.

This street also leads past the big white house surrounded by a half acre of trees. On it are a couple of magisterial ponderosa pines that are cathedrals in and of themselves. Their bottom branches begin where those of most other trees leave off. They always bring me to a halt and cause me to take a deep, shuddering breath. And I say a brief, selfish prayer for the woman that owns the property: may God spare her many more years so it will not be sold.

Drawing stares

One of the things that slows me down on occasion is that I usually take along a book, a meaty book. That way I can read a few sentences now and then and have something to mull over as I walk. If my mind is not distracted by the sights, now and then I stop and scribble a note. That can draw stares.

One time a woman came running out of her house and demanded to know what I was writing down. She was quite hostile, as if I had no right to stop in front of her house to take notes. She was right, you know: writing is a suspicious activity, especially when done in public. The writer may be a tax adjuster taking note of improvements or a burglar planning to return after dark. Writers are a bit of both — the bureaucrat and the burglar. Yes, a writer on foot may trespass on your privacy.

Now, if I get a brainstorm, I stop at a *Tim Horton's* to scribble notes. Or, even better, at *Starbuck's*. It's attached to a big *Chapters* bookstore where there's a book of essays that I've been reading in installments. The author (Adorno) is a neo-Marxist, so my benefiting from his insight without benefiting the publisher would have pleased him, don't you think?

Along this street there are also some beefy horse chestnuts, and the sidewalk is littered with brown, shriveled leaves. Horse chestnuts do not make a gracious, colorful transition in the fall. When the time comes, they retreat within themselves like crabby old uncles and leave the folderol of fall to others.

More time for rumination

A retired couple cruise by on bicycles. They're fit and neatly dressed, right out of a Sear's catalogue, determined to make their transition gracious. I've only ridden my bike, an orange racer, once this summer. After my operation, the hard seat doesn't agree with me. But walking gives so much more time for rumination. (That's why cows don't ride bicycles.)

After skirting a mall and a *Holiday Inn*, my route takes me up a steep embankment to the top of an overpass across the QEW, the corridor between Toronto and the U.S. To get to the top of the rutted, yellow clay path, I take a running start. If you don't get up a head of speed, your feet begin to slip and you have to grab the stunted fir trees with their sticky sap to keep yourself from sliding back. At the top, you clamber over a galvanized steel barrier and there you are – king of the castle. An endless stream of cars and trucks whines by on the divided highway below.

I often meet kids on this path. They're the ones who have worn it down to tree roots. Often they'll grin and say something to me. Seeing a guy who's almost 60 navigating their terrain seems to give them a feeling of kinship. Otherwise, with some striking exceptions, they tend to avoid your eyes when you meet them on the sidewalk.

One of the striking exceptions is a girl who says Hi! whenever I meet her, and she says it with a wide, open smile as if she's genuinely pleased. It makes me think she's not from around here. Maybe she moved here from some small town in northern Ontario. City walkers tend to develop a hooded, wooden face, a sort of asocial camouflage to carry them safely past others without contact.

Like the infamous bigfoot

For the last few blocks I walk along the gravel shoulder of the service road that parallels the QEW. The rough gravel underfoot fills me with nostalgia. All the best

Continued on page 11...

For Stillness and Wild Raspberries

wild raspberry branch
bent over this sun dancing woodsy path
heavy with crimson fruit for picking

as I hurry through this bush
that harbors an ache of stillness
quietness peace

hurry through this life
in pursuit of whatever it is we are all
so ardently pursuing
that even this one moment of absolute beauty

the pause
the brush of the eternal

could pass uncelebrated

In the Hammock

it's an upward look
into the unpruned tangle of pine
and apple
living branches and shell of sky
stretched edge to edge over the farm
beyond the flash of yellow-bellied finch

day heat retreats
I swing suspended
between grey silk dome
and emerald carpet

the most important work
of the day
happening here

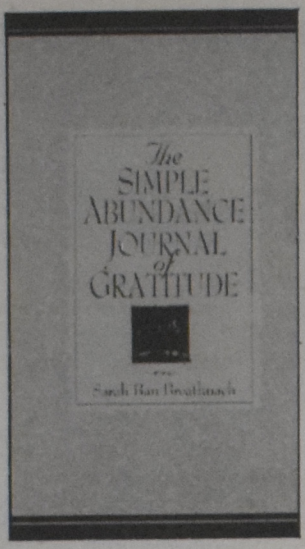
Linda Siebenga

Every day can be Thanksgiving Day

Lisa M. Petsche

Last month marked the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a jarring reminder not only of the evil in our world, but of how life can dramatically change in an instant and how our existence on earth can end at any moment, without warning.

It will also be a year ago this month that I learned of the sudden death of a long-time friend. Those of us who were close to him have yet to become accustomed to his absence, and are still struggling to attach meaning to the seemingly senseless loss of someone so vital.



An attitude freely chosen

At the same time, though, Thanksgiving Day is fast approaching, and this has me reflecting upon the concept of gratitude. Not the major-celebration kind, though, but rather the everyday kind that can sustain us throughout the year as we go about our busy, but often outwardly mundane lives, pursuing happiness in an imperfect world.

Everything I've read on the subject portrays gratitude as an attitude, freely chosen: a way of perceiving life — as abundant rather than lacking — and the world around us — as friendly rather than hostile.

In her book, *The Simple Abundance Journal of Gratitude*, Sarah Ban Breathnach says that "gratitude is the most passionate, transformative force in the cosmos."

How so? For one thing, it heads off feelings of entitlement that can lead to jealousy, greed and bitterness, as well as hopelessness that results in cynicism and impotence.

Moreover, because they regard themselves as blessed, grateful people experience a natural desire to share their abundance, demonstrating generosity towards relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers and strangers. They understand that giving not only helps others, but also has its own rewards. And their joy is contagious, rubbing off on those around them.

Grateful people forgive

Grateful people are also forgiving people, demonstrating mercy and compassion. They give others the benefit of the doubt, they're tolerant of human shortcomings, and they believe in second chances. They also trust that there's a valuable lesson in every type of adversity, and that God wants only good for them.

Gratitude isn't just about appreciating the goodness and beauty surrounding us, though. It also includes valuing our own God-given attributes: intellect, positive personality traits, skills and talents.

Clearly one of the best things we can do for our children is nurture in them an attitude of gratitude. To accomplish this, we need to role model it through our own approach to life.

In fact, the Bible tells us, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Ban Breathnach points out that this doesn't mean we'll always feel like smiling. Give thanks, anyway, she advises, trusting in gratitude's power to redeem even the most challenging situations.

Certainly all of us have experienced times when life has disappointed us, perhaps in the form of a betrayal, loss of a loved one, job loss, illness, a mistake made, or being passed over for a promotion or award. Understandably, we may feel at such times that there isn't much to be thankful for. Yet there are always blessings in our lives if we look hard enough. Too often we overlook the basics: faith, family, friends, home, job, physical and mental health, and the serenity of nature. We also neglect to count misfortune that's been avoided, due to an informed choice, intuition, someone else's intervention, or perhaps sheer luck.

Not everything we need or deserve

While life isn't always going to seem fair — that is, we may not always have everything we think we need or deserve — author Melody Beattie assures us that gratitude "turns what we have into enough, and more.... It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend." It brings day-to-day contentment, and soothes us in times of trouble. It also has a magnetic quality, attracting more goodness our way.

In fact, as gratitude guru Ban Breathnach puts it, when we concentrate on and express gratitude for the abundance in our lives, "we experience Heaven on earth," discovering "the sacred in the ordinary" and realizing that "every day is literally a gift." In other words, every day becomes Thanksgiving Day.

Local church leaders oppose pro-Zionist Christian meeting in Holy Land

Ross Dunn

JERUSALEM (ENI) — Local church leaders in the Holy Land have expressed their strong opposition to a gathering of thousands of Christians who have given their full support for Israel's struggle with the Palestinians.

The leaders were speaking Sept. 23 in reaction to the presence of pro-Zionist Christians, who have come to Israel for the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles. The Christians, many of them from the United States, gave a huge public outpouring of support to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon.

'Extremely disappointing'

"It's extremely disappointing," said the Rev. Yazeed Said, who is chaplain to the Anglican bishop in the Holy Land, Riah Abu Al-Assal.

Said, who was born in Nazareth and educated in England, said that some Christian groups from the West, in particular a segment of the American community, have a distorted picture of what was happening in the Middle East.

"The struggle is not between Muslims and Jews, it is between Israelis and Palestinians. The conflict is political, not religious," he told ENI. "It is one thing to talk about peace and justice. It is another to relate blindly to one side, without taking into account the needs and hopes of the other."

At a conference hall in Jerusalem, about 2,500 Christians cheered wildly and gave successive ovations to Sharon, who vowed never to compromise on Israel's security. "Sometimes I get letters from some of you, blaming me for being too moderate," said Sharon.

One of the most sensitive issues

He received a positive response from the largely Evangelical crowd when he claimed that Pope John Paul II had told him during a visit here in 2000 that Jerusalem was holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims but had been promised "only to the Jews."

Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and is claimed as a political and religious capital by both sides.

The Christian gathering comes at a time when Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat remains under siege in his West Bank headquarters in Ramallah, most of which has been destroyed by Israeli troops.

Military offensive strongly criticized

The military offensive, which began after a Palestinian suicide bombing last week in Tel Aviv that killed six people, has been strongly criticized in the international community.

But the Christian pilgrims at the Feast of the Tabernacles celebration, organized by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, remained unwavering in their support for Israel during this time of crisis.

"I honor and admire Israel and their contribution to the whole world. It is in my heart," said Bonnie Dadidakis, of Houston, Texas, who had come to the event in a group organized by the Texas Republican Women.

But Said made it clear such thoughts were not shared by the local Christian community. "The Christian church in the Holy Land is an ancient one, dating back from the beginning of Christianity, and it is thought that we have more Hebrew blood than some of the immigrants who come here," he said.

"Sensible people will not equate their ideology with the Christian tradition and history in Palestine," he said.

Walking to work and listening

... continued from page 10

roads in the town where I grew up were gravel. Those that didn't get much use, like the one behind our house, developed a green island down the center, which we appreciated after a hard rain. It was almost as good as a sidewalk. If you walked on the muddy road, your boots would pick up more and more mud till you were lumbering along like the infamous bigfoot who lived in the swamp.

As the gravel crunches underfoot and the grasses encroaching from the ditch whip my legs, memories of my boyhood wanderings course up through my feet and legs with a vividness that is startling.

Sure, cars are great in bad weather and when you're in a hurry. But they remove you from the earth, and the earth holds many memories; you have to walk about on it and let your feet pick them up like a gramophone needle gathers music from the grooves of those old, vinyl records stored in the bottom of your bedroom closet.

God also made your feet for listening.

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Christian Living

Why go to church? (5)

To accomplish the work of praise (2)

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

A.A. van Ruler

Our last answer to the question, 'Why go to church?' got to the heart of our topic, and it is worth our while to think it through further. We ended up at the mutual delight between God and man and the full self-affirmation of man involved in this mutual exchange.

This self-affirmation is the core of human existence. To exist is to transcend, I said. It is to step out and to step over a boundary — to step out of what is, not into nothingness, but into the presence of our Creator.

Praise is not merely the goal, the end, the meaning of life; it is its very essence; it is life itself.

It is also, therefore, to be called out of nothing by the Creator into being, into the presence of the Creator.

These are the two ways we can use the term "to exist." But if we take proper account of the phrase "into the presence of the Creator," we see that the two meanings converge. "To exist" is in both instances "to exist before the face of the Creator." This is both to step *out of* and *into* being.

Praise is a form of self-forgetfulness

With Gerhardus van der Leeuw, we can say that praise is a form of self-forgetfulness because we surrender all power over our own life to the power of him whom is being praised. But with K.H. Miskotte we can also say that to praise God in worship always points to life's utmost fullness, albeit a fullness that we do not yet possess, that is, it is never completely true in ones own heart and life, yet one does possess it in worship.

This is why we're here – to praise the Lord out of joy. Praise is not merely the goal, the end, the meaning of life; it is its very essence; it is life itself. We are the glory, the joy of God. "We are here to glorify God and all that we are given we are given that we may glorify him," says Theodor a Brakel.

This is the only meaning of life to be found. And it is meaning enough. It fills our entire existence.

We learned this from Israel. G. von Rad says that one of the most remarkable parts of the Old Testament teachings about man is that his most characteristic act is to praise. It is life itself.

We will vegetate

If this is so, we must go to church regularly, for if we don't, we will lose our unique position and worth. We will vegetate like cows grazing in the meadows. We will stop existing, and cease being fully human.

Church-going naturally raises more questions. 'Why praise?' we asked. And we answered, 'For being and the ground of being.' We praise our Creator with an existence that rejoices in its own being.

This the most basic answer we can give.

Praising our Redeemer

But besides *being*, there is also *salvation*. We acknowledge not just our Creator but also our Redeemer. For we know not only that we are but also that we are sinners. We are even born as such and that is why we are in a state of lostness. But then our Redeemer came, and his work of redemption counts more than our lostness.

This, too, is grounds for praise. We can reflect endlessly on the fact that we are sinners rescued from eternal lostness. In fact, we can never completely comprehend it. We do better to sing about it. We can grasp it better in song. In fact, it is more truthful when we sing it than when we merely say it, just as it is more truthful when we say it than when we merely think it.

Our praise for our salvation involves a fear and trembling that is lacking in our praise for being. The shipwrecked foundling, newly pulled from the depths, stands on dry land, knees quivering. He almost drowned. His life passed before his eyes, but at the last moment, he has been saved. That's why, when he praises God, his voice sticks in his throat with emotion. Gradually he overcomes his fright and his voice becomes firmer. Part of eternal life is being able to praise God in our lostness. But it takes time to get that far.

So praising God for our salvation involves fear and trembling when we look back. But praise also makes us look forward. There is not just being saved from our lostness; there is also anticipation of the future: looking ahead to eternal glory. Hope is born in our hearts. We see God not just as our Creator and Redeemer but also as our Finisher and Glorifier. This, too, is part of our praise – that we are not in this world without God and therefore without hope, expectation and a future. Over against fear and trembling there's the tingle of anticipation.

What are we looking forward to?

What is it we are looking forward to? To the return of Christ, our Redeemer? Or to the liberation of man and the world as the fruit of his work? Or to the state of our completed redemption? We must say Yes to all of the above. But then we must add that in all this we look forward to that which shall be redeemed – namely, created being.

So here we are back where we began. It passes through the lostness of sin, through redemption and through glorification. An awful lot happens to it. And this is what the church's praise is all about. But in the end redemption is more than the Redeemer, and redeemed being more than redemption, and being is more than being redeemed.

Once again in our praise we turn from salvation to being. We may quarrel about what comes first. Must we not know we are redeemed in Christ to come to a knowledge of creation? So, in our worship, shouldn't praise for our redemption take precedence over praise for being? There's much to be said for this, as long as we remember that salvation leads us to being. This is essential to redemption, for it is the redemption of created being.

We must also remember that coming to salvation is different than coming to being. On the level of knowing, salvation may precede being, but on the level of reality being is more fundamental than salvation. Therefore, in all the church's praise, the sonorous tone of being sounds through the trembling tone of salvation and the tingling tone of expectation, for being is what we have been given, what we look forward to and what we already are.

The greater work of God

We can also quarrel over what is the greater work of God, being or salvation. Creation is to call into being what is not. Once we were not here, we were nothing, but then we were called into being and we became something. Redemption does not call something into being out of nothing. On the contrary, we were here already. We were here as sinners. We were here as lost for all eternity. We were fallen and languished in our guilt. The guilt of sin is very different from the nothingness out of which we were created. Our Redeemer raised us from our fallen state. He atoned for our guilt. God himself, God the Son, took on himself our human nature to accomplish this work.

The incarnation of the Word, the atonement for sin, the redemption from our lostness – these are all tremendous mysteries. They require no less divine power than creation from nothing. But do they require more? Does the guilt of the lost sinner pose a greater challenge to God than calling forth creation out of nothing? Or must we say that the Redeemer holds on to the sinner, who is his creature and who *is*? And that sin moves him to overflow with compassion toward this creature on which he has a hold? What must call forth our greatest admiration: that we are or that we are saved? Must we answer this question? I'd rather not, for there's a great deal to be said for either position.

In either case, our praise rings through it all – from creation to eternal glory. Salvation adds another dimension to that praise. Isn't it God's free love that moved him to save me from my lostness? Isn't it a free act of election? Must I not look back into eternity, into the eternal counsel of God? The same is true when I think of creation. But when I think of redemption, I discover my eternal election; I find myself chosen from eternity. This is how I wholly find myself and

come to my full identity. The praise of the church is also essentially praise for our predestination.

We can pose the question of praise – and of church-going as its expression – from another angle. We can ask, "Why do we do it? Why do we praise our Creator and Redeemer? Do we gain anything by it? Is it a form of flattery by which we hope to win God's favor?"

Something happens to God in our praise. His power, his glory, he himself is confirmed, established by it.

This question cuts deeper than we may think. We said that praise is the meaning and end of life. That's why God created us: he wants to dwell on the praises of his people. This poses the question not why we do it but why God wills it. Does God resemble an idle tyrant who just can't get enough praise?

NEERLANDIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A log church built in Neerlandia, Alberta in 1915.

Pure spontaneity, freedom

To this question we are inclined to answer: "Of course not! We don't do it to get something; we do it just for the fun of it. That's just part of our nature. This answer corresponds to our answer to the question why God created us. He did it out of his freedom and goodness. He didn't have to do it. He didn't need us. He did it because it pleased him. Reality is, in a sense, God's fun. There's a high munificence and generosity in God's doing. We must seek to reflect a similar munificence and generosity. We do so in our praise, for it involves a pure spontaneity and freedom, a certain courtliness and grace.

Some have tried to delineate this answer more seriously and say that we are here to the greater glory of God (*ad majorem gloriam dei*). This is why praise belongs to the essence of human existence. This answer is dear to me, but I want to point out how unusual it is.

This comes to expression in that little word "greater." Is this possible? Can we in any way increase the glory of God? Can we add anything to it?

Unthinkable

God is glory itself, a full, overflowing, self-sufficient glory. But God himself added something to it. He called the world into being, and all the works of his hand also belong to his honor and glory. It is more than the radiation of his glory or the mirror of his glory. It is a piece of his glory that he has added to the full glory of his being. That's astonishing. Unfathomable. It is the irrational (in the sense of non-rational) in creation, the unthinkable.

But we still haven't gone far enough. All of created reality is part of the honor of God. It is the 'more.' It is his own handiwork.

But then comes the work of his creatures as well. When the flowers bloom and the birds sing, don't they hereby add to the glory of God? This is even more true of man, for he is a conscious, willing, speaking and acting creature. Can't he, by what he says and does be here to the greater glory of God? Our entire being all across the line must be to the greater glory of God.

This receives plastic form in our singing declaration of God's praise, in the liturgy. So we go to church for the greater glory of God. It doesn't just do something for us; it also does something for God. Our songs of praise increase his glory.

God finds rest in our praise

Something happens to God in our praise. His power, his glory, he himself is confirmed, established by it. Not just for our consciousness or for the worshiping congregation, but, in a manner of speaking, in himself. God finds rest in our praise. He dwells in it. He gets an address.

Miskotte points to another meaning of praise. He points out that this never-ending praise of God in life and in death, in prosperity and adversity, in the bloom and in the decay of culture leads to true life for the first time because this way of being human – Israel's way – first introduced into history what we call "spirit" (in distinction from soul, heart, emotion, etc.). Spirit is the choice for, the conscious orientation toward, the faithful commitment to a hymnodic life.

Usually it is said that the Greeks introduced spirit into the world. But the Greek spirit is, above all, oriented to thought, to reason, to participation in eternal truth. But this conception of Spirit by-passes temporal, historical reality to anchor us in the eternal, and we participate in the eternal by virtue of our reason.

However, in Israel's conception of spirit we remain within temporal, historical reality to the end. Here it is a matter of choice and will. We relate all that is and that happens to the living, acting God. Even when everything becomes dark to our moral reason, the song of the lark trills out above the darkness. The spirit of praise is more than reason and conscience. It knows God in all things.

Mooring human existence

This doesn't just establish God but also man. Going to church can be understood as establishing, in the sense of mooring, human existence. This would introduce an element of usefulness into our praise and into our liturgy and worship. We do it, then, to make firm our footsteps. But the one doesn't exclude the other: to genuinely exist as a human being is to praise God into eternity.

From our answer, that we go to church to finish the work of praise, we draw several conclusions.

First. We go to church for the sake of the liturgy. The liturgy is quite literally the accomplishment of a public work, the work of the public, of the whole, of the entire people of God. The work of the people of God is the work of praising him.

Second. Therefore, church-going does not depend first of all on the quality of the sermon. Of course, the minister must give his best; he must be a well-rounded theologian; he must be creative and artistic; he must be steeped in Scripture; he must live in intimate contact with the people; and he must minister the Word in all its fullness. And the members of the congregation also have a responsibility over toward the sermon. They must be familiar with Scripture and the church's teachings; they must live close to God; they must passionately undergo all the violence that happens in the world; and out of this all they must listen intently to the sermon, reflect on it, discuss it among themselves and let the minister know what they think of it. That's no small assignment for either the minister or the congregation.

But the worship service does not stand or fall with the sermon. The main feature is elsewhere: in the liturgy, in how it performs the work of praise. So what if the sermon falls short once in a while; we can nevertheless sing a psalm. That is the heart of the matter. This is how we enter into the presence of God to praise him.

Third. There is plenty of call for liturgical renewal, but we must not forget that we have never been without liturgy, no matter how mangled, truncated or overdone. More important than liturgical renewal is the 'liturgizing' of our sense of life and of the church. I mean that our church-going must be permeated with the realization that we go to church to liturgize, to praise. Not first of all to get a chance to be converted. Not to listen to a lecture or to draw instruction from the sermon. Not even to listen to the sermon as the proclamation of the Word. Although the latter is important, it is not the central thing.

What it is all about

A single psalm is enough. Think of what it means: to sing a psalm in the church with the congregation in the presence of God! This is what it is all about.

When we understand and experience church-going and worship this way, it influences the way we understand and experience our entire existence. Then all our activity in the world picks up something liturgical. All across the line it will become a service of praise to him who is our Creator, our Redeemer and our Glorifier.

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Thanksgiving

Are we truly thankful?

Ron De Boer

Okay, it's that time of year when teachers and department store managers create displays with yellow and brown leaves and horns of plenty, out of which yams, turkeys and pumpkins fall.

It's the time of year when we tie corns stalks together and lean them in the corner at the front entrance of our homes and place weird corn with the purple kernels we'd never eat on our table centre-pieces. It's that time of year we yearn for pleasant Indian summer temperatures on the holiday Monday so we can go for a walk in the woods or get in one last game of slow-pitch before the north winds return.

It's Thanksgiving, the weekend we're supposed to officially demonstrate thankfulness for fat bank accounts, cable television and our nice air-conditioned cars. It's thanksgiving, a time to reflect on our stock portfolios, check the numbers to our all-inclusive vacation funds, and start thinking about booking next summer's cottage.

Lame enthusiasm

My generation celebrates Thanksgiving, but I can't think of a word more misused and uttered with lame enthusiasm than the words "thank you." And the reason is my generation — those of us in our 30s and 40s — have had a pretty easy life.

We haven't seen a depression the likes of what our Opas and Omas saw, who lost homes and businesses after the crash of 1929. We haven't tasted the collateral damage of a World War, when food rations were the norm and school children were taught to hide under their desks should an air raid sneak up on them. Most of those in my generation didn't endure the agonizing first days of a new country, new language and new relationships, of building farms and businesses from scratch. Most of my generation came of age during the free expression of the '70s, the money grabbing frenzy of the '80s and the technological explosion of the 1990s.

Lip service?

Our biggest concern after finishing school and getting married has been snagging a mortgage and paying for Christian education. It's no wonder our parents shake their heads at us when we complain of stressful times — like having to give up our weekly golf game because the kids play Saturday morning soccer. Are we truly thankful for what we have or do we simply give lip service on weekends like Thanksgiving, expecting nothing less than what we've received?

Being thankful, by it's purest definition, is to feel gratitude toward some person or perhaps Deity for things, be they special talents, a nice paycheque or God's free grace. But we use the word *thanks* — or *thank-you* or *thank you very much* or *thank-you kindly* or *thanks-a-lot* or *many thanks* or *thanks-a-million* — without even thinking, like a clearing of the throat.

CATERINE MILINAIRE

In Vermont, the Millman family say grace before enjoying their Thanksgiving feast.

You receive the change from the boy at the variety store and "thank" him for returning what's due to you. Meaningful? I'd say not. You're not thankful he's returned your money. He's supposed to and you expect him to. "Thank-you" to the boy at the variety store is really "goodbye," or "you counted correctly — good for you," or "I don't know what else to say but I should say something so… thank-you."

Or you're listening to a voice recording for the Bank of Montreal you've just called and the voice opens with, "Thank you for calling Bank of Montreal, all our operators are busy, please hold…." Is this woman, who recorded this message two weeks ago in her little cubicle before clocking out for the day, truly grateful for your call? She isn't even human. If she was grateful at the time of her recording, does it stand she continues to be grateful to you for all of eternity because she said it in a recording? Perhaps she's grateful because the bank is working out a way to stamp a service charge on us for calling them about the personal savings we've handed over for them to invest.

Finally giving me what I deserve

Some of my colleagues will say "Thank God" with a tone that doesn't at all sound like gratitude. They'll say, "Thank God I finally got a decent grade 11 class to teach," with a tone that indicates they always deserve intelligent students but happened to luck out this time. My students will say, "Thank God it's Friday," or "Thank God this is my last year of high school" with a tired, I've-tarried-a-long-and-thorny-road tone of voice. What they mean is, "God's finally giving me what I deserve." Even those who don't take the Lord's name in vain will say something like, "Thank goodness he finally got his act together and is spending more time with the kids." Is this person thankful? Or is she angry that whoever is being thanked should really have done whatever is being thanked for a lot sooner?

You'll hear celebrities and athletes receiving awards for their accomplishments "thanking" their employers, their agents, their managers, and — "Oh, yeah, my parents." Thanking simply becomes part of the public name-dropping script. Do the losers thank those people in their lives as heartily? Does our level of thankfulness rise with success?

Ironic thank-yous

You'll also hear people use the word "thanks" to mean its opposite: "Thanks to the idiot in line in front of me at Zehrs, I missed my bus and didn't get to work in time." Or "Thanks to Mom, we're late for young people's — again!" Twisting the word "thanks" into an ironic statement seems particularly fashionable with the teenage crowd.

Back in the seventies, a commercial ran on television for Milk: "Thank-you very much, thank-you very much, I want to thank-you, ahh…milk." So we thank inanimate objects, too. I remember patting the hood of my 1980 Chevy Citation after a 20 hour drive to Dordt College in 1986. "Thanks, old buddy," I said, as if that 1000 pounds of sheet metal and lug nuts would respond to my gratitude by returning its loyalty to me in future trips.

Thanking animals

Or animals. We thank animals all the time as if their limited brains understand gratitude. Most of the time we're simply reinforcing good behavior in our dogs and cats. When Fluffy learns to go in her litter box, we say, "good kitty," meaning, of course, "Thank-you for pooping in the litter box." But what we're really grateful for is that she didn't do-do in the living room. So, ultimately, we're thankful for NOT having the opposite of what we expect. This attitude, I think, is at the root of our thanks. We aren't necessary thankful when we say we're thankful. What we're doing is expressing our gratitude for not experiencing the flip side of what we're demonstrating thankfulness for.

I'll push this a step further. Can we truly be thankful for what we have unless we've had a taste of the opposite of that for which we are grateful? How can we truly be thankful for our house unless we've been homeless? How can I truly be thankful for my job unless

CHRISTMAS FOOD PARCELS

Netherlands Bazaar is again preparing Christmas packages for needy families of Dutch descent in Ontario. If you know of such a family, submit their name by **November 13, 2002**, to surprise them with a food parcel at Christmas. Please supply the number of family members, the ages of the children and the reason they merit aid. Include the name and telephone number of a contact person who can verify the information.

Send letters to:
Committee Netherlands Bazaar
Attn: Mrs. G. Spaans
15 Pavilion St.
Unionville ON L3R 1N8

or call one of the committee members:
Ge Spaans 905-477-1243
Lia de Greet 905-878-1040
Bets Speelman 416-742-1172
Jannie Thomas 416-223-5026

Netherlands Bazaar raises money by holding huge Bazaars. Last year it distributed 424 parcels to needy families and sent 100 disadvantaged children to summer camp.

I've been unemployed?

John Den Bok, the executive director for International Needs Canada, will never view western affluence in the same way after spending a few weeks in Africa earlier this year. He has stared into the face of poverty and hopelessness, and even though he has returned to a heated living room and a fridge full of food, his thankfulness for what we in Canada have come to expect has taken on new meaning.

Grace: a pre-meal reflex?

We thank God for our food every day. Do any of us know what hunger truly is? Has thanking God for food become a pre-meal reflex, something we've been trained to do since our toddler days — that hurried prayer at the beginning of meals before filling our stomachs and scraping the leftovers into the garbage?

One might take this argument even further and concede that terrible circumstances — be they hunger or terrorism — cause us to sense fear which enables us to be more thankful. Up until September 11, 2001, we all felt the security of living an ocean away from most of the world's conflict. How could we possibly be thankful for a terrorist-free country? We denied terrorism on American soil was even possible. After the dust had settled in New York and America had come face to face with its vulnerabilities, the nation embraced God with a fervor some said they hadn't seen since World War II. Politicians went on national television and told us to embrace our families and thank God for America.

Most meaningful Thanksgiving in 50 years

Thanksgiving 2001 was probably the most meaningful for both Canadians and Americans in maybe a half century. Our sense of thankfulness for our families, communities, freedom and security came into sharp focus with our realization that evil lurking within our very borders could snatch away a quality of life we feel we have a right to. Some have argued we can even be thankful for terrorist attacks in that they shook a nation out of its complacency. Perhaps a better way to think of it would be to thank God for taking a terrible act and shaping it into a platform where courage, strength, faith and hope have been broadcasted to the world.

I remember struggling as a boy in *feeling* thankful. How does one feel thankful while saying he is thankful? I think Psalm 95 gives us a good indication. Here, the psalm-writer says, "Come let us sing to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." You can hear real passion in the writer's request to show thankfulness.

Or the famous Psalm 100:4: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." Why do we thank him? Because he's good. Simple and sweet. None of us can claim the quality of goodness and it is from this goodness that we are cared for. Philippians 4:6 tells us not to be anxious about anything, "but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." So when we make requests, we are to do it *while* giving thanks. That's a good lesson for me to remember.

This thanksgiving, let's move beyond the lip service we give to being thankful. Let's take David's cue and with heartfelt conviction, thank personally and with passion those who deserve our thanks — our parents, our spouses, our kids, our friends, our ministers, our employers, and, of course, God, who gives us everything, including the sense of gratitude which he'd love to see us exercise with meaning.

Pakistani Christian leader warns of 'reign of terror' for Christians if Iraq attacked

Dan Wooding

LONDON, UK (ANS) — A leading Pakistani Christian has warned that an attack on Iraq by America could cause a severe increase in persecution for Christians in Pakistan, according to a news release from Christian Solidarity Worldwide based in the UK.

Cecil Chaudry, Executive Secretary of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance and Senior Vice Chairman of the Minorities Advisory Council, said: "I see terrible things happening if Iraq is invaded, including attacks on our churches and even attacks on our homes.

"Any attack on Iraq is going to signify to the extremists, rightly or wrongly, that this is a war of Christianity against Islam.

"We have not been able to weed out our local terrorists and this could bring about a reign of terror on the Christian community should Iraq be attacked by America.

"When the Gulf War took place, Iraq was the aggressor and Pakistan was part of the multi-national coalition force, but our churches were stoned, a Catholic priest was manhandled and furniture burned.

"If the UN give their support to action against Iraq it will still be difficult for Christians, but the Government may be able to keep the situation under control, as they will say that Pakistan as a country has to stand by the Security Council's recommendations."

Retired Group Captain Cecil Chaudry, who was decorated as a fighter pilot during the two wars against India, has dedicated his life to the struggle against the blasphemy laws.

Internal enemies threaten

Chaudry holds that these laws need to be repealed, adding: "I fought two wars for Pakistan. I didn't fight for the glory of religion but for the freedom of my country against an external aggressor. If I can fight for that, I will also campaign against Pakistan's internal enemies which threaten the destruction of my country.

Chaudry has also been instrumental in safeguarding the church in Pakistan since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center last year, briefing police chiefs on the best way to protect the Christian community including advising against arming Christians to defend their churches.

He has advocated discreet protection by law enforcement agencies in order to prevent any recurrence of attacks such as that at Bahawalpur last October when 15 people were murdered in a church.

He said: "Churches are as full as ever and Christians have a lot of faith in their leaders. We have taken a lot of trouble for their protection, but I don't want armed police guarding churches while worship is going on as it puts fear in peoples' minds. There is fear in the minds of people, but it has not deterred them from worship which shows how strong their faith is."

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides

Notes from a wily veteran

I think if this teaching thing doesn't work out, I'll go into sports broadcasting. I may lack some of the important qualifications for the job, such as quick thinking and an obsessive desire for numbers, but I have one overwhelming qualification — I know the lingo. For example, if I were broadcasting a football game it would probably sound something like this:

Tim: *They're playing with a real sense of urgency out there, Bob. You have to respect their athleticism.*

Bob: *Yeah, and there's no love lost between these two teams.*

Tim: *True. Look at Williams over there. He's really elevated his game and played with a lot of emotion this year. He sure has his game face on. Look at him making his presence known out there — he always gives 110 per cent, adding a new dimension to their offense.*

Bob: *Yup, the fans are really getting their money's worth today.*

Tim: *No kidding, Bob. But you know, the wily veteran has only been played sparingly this season. As a matter of fact, the team's been riddled with injuries this season. And yet, Williams continues to make the heads-up play.*

Bob: *Yeah, and the team as a whole is really playing with a sense of urgency out there. (and so the cycle continues...)*

Repeating cycles of clichés

Sports talk is really all about repeating cycles of clichés. There's a lot of dead space to fill between plays, pitches, or whistles. Baseball has the emptiest spaces, so its commentators really have to pour on the statistics, anecdotes, and (most importantly) the clichés. The pitcher's trying "to pitch out of a jam." The batter is "seeing the ball well." Both teams are trying to "manufacture some runs."

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with this. You try filling in two hours of silence with innovative and original thoughts. It is an exclusive language, though. You have to be "in the loop" to fully appreciate and understand their meaning.

Church clichés

As I was thinking about all these clichés that are used in sports, I started thinking about some of the ones that we use in our spirituality. In church, we hear someone say that God gave them a special burden for a certain group of people. We pray for God to intercede for those who are lost in sin or backsliding. We ask for abundant mercies and we appeal for traveling mercies. We sing and preach about "revival."

One of the clichés I notice most is the word "just" as in, "Lord, we just ask you for..." It's an interesting one, because it seems to imply that our request is very humble and asking for very little ("just heal this man").

It would be an interesting linguistic exercise to examine where some of these come from, but I think that would only be interesting to linguists. Instead, I'd like to make a small suggestion. Maybe we should use these clichés sparingly when we talk to non-believers.

A couple of reasons for this. First, we sometimes say them without really understanding what they mean and we can give people the wrong idea. Phrases like "I fear the Lord," for example.

Second, the use of this kind of language tends to be exclusive. Only we have access to what it really means. It's similar to what happens when a teacher's spouse gets dragged to a school staff social. Unfamiliar names and phrases get tossed around until the victim is looking for a chalk brush to choke himself with.

I think if we all give 110 per cent in this area, we'll really make our presence known out there.

Tim Antonides is a teacher and sports coach currently studying in Chicago, Illinois.

News Analysis/Opinion

Power struggle in China could affect the church

Xu Mei

BEIJING (Compass) — Against all expectations, it appears Chinese President Jiang Zemin will now cling to power in China for at least another five years.

Earlier, it was widely reported that Hu Jintao would take over the leadership of the country, bringing into power a whole new, young generation of "technocrats." However, Jiang has been concerned about maintaining "unity and stability" at all costs and at the traditional gathering of the Communist Party's top leadership at the seaside resort of Beidaihe this past summer, it appears his will prevailed.

Imaginative leadership is needed

Jiang persuaded the military, which is ideologically resistant to change, to back him.

Jiang's determination to maintain his control seems likely to lead to greater political stagnation, rather than the hoped-for stability. Imaginative leadership is needed to solve the growing problems China is facing: environmental catastrophes — flood and drought are now annual occurrences; ethnic divisions — the increased restlessness of Muslim Uygurs and Tibetan Buddhists; and social tensions — endemic corruption and the growing gap between rich and poor. A continuation of Jiang's rule will most probably see China sliding further towards ungovernability.

Symbolic of Jiang's pretensions is his decision to turn his ancestral village birthplace in Anhui into a visitors' shrine at the cost of millions.

Jiang's refusal to hand over the reins of power gracefully has split the ruling Communist Party. In an unlikely alliance, both Party liberals keen on political reform and remnant leftist Maoists horrified at corruption and Westernization have joined forces to oppose him. For the moment their room to manoeuver is limited, but Jiang's alienation of powerful groupings within the Party bodes ill for China's long-term political stability.

Christians concerned about developments

Christians, both inside and outside China, view these developments with some concern. Under Jiang, the Communist Party has continued to implement a repressive policy to control and limit all religions. Jiang's obsession to crush the Falun Gong movement has led to a crack-down on all independent religious groupings deemed to be cults, including many independent house churches. Central government and provincial regulations alike have tightened control of the church, implementing draconian fines and even imprisoning independent evangelists.

Jiang has also been the driving force for the concept of "making religion compatible with socialism." This has provided Bishop Ding, Mrs. Cao Shengjie (the new leader of the China Christian Council) and other politicized leaders within the Protestant state-church with powerful backing to attack evangelical pastors and theological students under the pretense of "theological construction."

At the beginning of this year, some observers believed this campaign was beginning to run out of steam. Now, Jiang's continuation in power may give Ding and Cao encouragement to push through their campaign, whose ultimate aim is to impose a liberal, Marxist theology on China's overwhelmingly evangelical church.

No one thought Hu Jintao's assumption of power would immediately usher in political reform or liberalize religious policy. He remains an unknown quantity. However, at the very least there was the opportunity for new voices to be heard and steps to be taken in the right direction.

Now, Jiang's continuance at the helm points to a continuance of repressive policies by an entrenched and corrupt bureaucracy. Any lightening of religious repression will be the gradual effect of China's opening up in the wake of its decision to join the World Trade Organization and in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics.

CHRISTIAN LABOUR ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

50th Celebration

October 26, 5:30 p.m.
Hamilton District Christian High School

The Christian Labour Association of Canada wishes to thank the many members of the Christian community for their 50 years of support. Your contributions and prayers have made it possible for us to move forward from a fledgling organization to a national trade union that continues to make biblical norms relevant for workplace justice. The Lord has richly blessed the work of our hands so that, today, we have the privilege of bringing this service to the lives of some 28,000 members in over 500 workplaces.

Celebratory events, attended by more than 1,200 people, have already been held in British Columbia, Alberta, and Southwestern Ontario.

Members and supporters are invited to celebrate with us on Saturday, October 26 at Hamilton District Christian High School. The evening begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by a banquet. The highlight of the program promises to be a keynote address by Dr. Calvin Seerveld entitled "Jubilee on the Job."

Tickets are available for $12.50 per person. To make a reservation, please call Pauline Buma at 1-800-463-2522, ex 201.

50 Years clac & Service

Incident at school on a Wednesday afternoon

Building Trust

Women are repeatedly accused of taking things personally. I cannot see any other honest way of taking them. Marya Mannes

Virginia Hart

I saw her walking slowly down the hall during the middle of an afternoon class. She seemed shaky, but I wasn't sure she didn't have a physical ailment or a limp. She smiled as I said hello on my way back from the drinking fountain. I entered the faculty room but something held me back to watch her. She opened the door of her locker, bowed her head and began to cry, this girl I did not know.

I walked to her, put a hand on her shoulder and said, "Are you okay? Can I help?" She cried and said, "My father left us. I was sitting in class this afternoon and thinking about the conversation between my mother and a woman from church last night who came over and quoted Bible passages."

'My father left eight weeks ago'

As she cried I put my arm around her. She wept as a child would with her mother. Then she began to talk. "My father left eight weeks ago. I am very close to my mother. Then my father dropped by last Friday night at the school banquet and took pictures.

"I used to dream our family would break up. And I would wake up afraid. I began to sense something was wrong between my parents. My father told us that he had a problem with himself and that in order to work it out he had to leave us. We were the ideal family. We went to church together twice every Sunday. When people ask me where my dad is, or if he is on a trip, it is hard to tell them the truth."

The girl said this was the first time she had broken down. I told her it was okay to cry. That it happens to me a lot. It is a release for feelings. I have a friend who wishes she could cry and she envies me.

She then said she wanted to phone her father. Her mother had encouraged her to do so, but she was not sure what to do or say. I suggested she think about it, get herself a drink of water and try to plan what she really wanted to say to her father. Then I encouraged her to feel free to talk to me about it afterwards. I went into the faculty room. The girl, her name was Lorrie, was calm now.

Please comfort her, pray with her

Before our conversation ended, I told her that if she ever needed to talk to someone at school she was welcome to talk with me anytime. In case I would not be there, I suggested the name of another teacher to approach, someone who I know is very compassionate. I also said that I knew a student in the senior grade who went through a similar crisis last year and who would be able to offer support to her. If she were to get to know her....

After school I approached the teacher and the student and asked them to offer support to the girl I met today. "Please talk with her, comfort her and pray with her, especially on the days when I am not here," I asked. The student responded with warmth and said they have a class together.

Lorrie is experiencing the pain of a separated family. I know that she will be okay; she is a beautiful kid.

Even if I wanted not to, I couldn't help but take it all personally.

Virginia Hart teaches in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is a woman of courage, a mother and a grandmother, and a true friend.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at: 1-780-473-0970, or by e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com

Opinion

Has the church changed?

Morris Greidanus

Retiring after 37 years in the ministry invites the question, "Has the church changed?" A reporter for the *Grand Rapids Press* asked what I was reflecting on anyway: What has changed? Is the CRC a stronger or weaker church than when I began in Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1964?

I could begin with the hymnals. The blue *Psalter Hymnal* arrived in 1957. When I preached here and there as a seminarian and on summer assignment, some churches still had the red book with the dramatic "Some day the silver cord will break," and "Good is the Lord and full of kind compassion" to the tune of Danny Boy. I recall fondly a fellow CRC immigrant hearing Danny Boy on the radio and objecting, "Not nice that they use our hymn tune for that!"

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

More hymns, quickly!

Soon everyone had the blue book. Wherever you preached you could pick five hymns and put them in the same slots in the service: opening hymn, penitent hymn, hymn of gratitude, hymn after the sermon, doxology. Communion was the same in most churches, four times a year, after a preparatory sermon the Sunday before. Most congregations used the trays with small glasses, but Iron Springs, Alberta surprised me on a classical appointment. As the service was about to begin I saw the elders (all male) carry in several plates of bread and chalices of wine.

"Do you have the common cup?"

"Yes."

"And you serve several tables?"

" Of course."

More hymns, quickly!

Singing off-the-wall

Almost 30 years after the blue hymnal came the grey one. Inclusive language, no "Faith of our fathers," different tune on "What a friend we have in Jesus"— not everyone bought it. Now congregations have their own supplement, or the added green book, or they just sing off-the-wall (to quote Henrietta Ten Harmsel) aided by keyboard, Power Point, and the organ.

Worship has changed in all denominations. The beginnings came for the CRC, and certainly for me, when the 1968 study report on worship reminded us that worship is a dialogue of God and his people. Since then, many congregations have given the people's voice back to them in spoken responses and prayers, reading Scripture, reciting creeds, and sharing joys and concerns.

During the '60s and '70s when the younger generation was critical of worship led by the monologue of one man, Alice and I were in the campus ministry at the University of Toronto. Our Hart House services used the gifts of the students in planning and responding, and I remember some remarkable services at the AACS's (now the Institute for Christian Studies) Niagara conference. CRC changes were much like the changes in the Roman Catholic church after Vatican II. A less top-down church. More peoples' participation. And a cross-denominational sharing of songs. One member noted to me after a vacation trip through different churches, "We are all singing the same songs."

At first, the most obvious change is that we now have women in office in many of our congregations. I have been delighted to serve with so many dedicated men and women in council in these 37 years. It's not that the work was not done carefully before women were in office, but now we do it with more gifts and creativity. Less aftershave, more insight into the needs of the whole congregation.

10-year-olds taking communion

Some folks worry that this change of women in office came at the expense of reading the Scriptures too differently from the past and that this new reading signals a major change in our theology. In my opinion, a more major change in our theological attitude can be seen around the Lord's Supper. Not only is it celebrated more frequently now: weekly in a few, monthly in many. More importantly, if you examine the CRC's *Yearbook* (I don't have one with me here, or I would do it for you), you see an interesting statistic under the Classes about confessing members under 18. Calvin encouraged 10-year-olds to take communion. We had crept up to high school age and past that, for you needed to know a lot and be firm in your commitment before confessing your faith. Now we see that in many congregations there are large numbers of confessing members under 18.

It moves me to see 10-year-olds at communion, no longer asking their parents, "Why can't I have that?" or trying to get some later in the church kitchen. They are welcomed at the table after a simple confession of their love for Jesus.

This is a major shift for a church that's known for reading the Ten Commandments and for total depravity. We have come to see the grace of God much more generously. Grace is not deserved by pious activity or deep knowledge; it is freely given to all who love Jesus.

Diligent evangelism?

Grace that is so amazingly generous and indiscriminate gives new energy and impetus for mission. I always felt uneasy about answering the question on credentials that delegates take to each classis on whether the church diligently engages in evangelism. We tried, but "diligently"? However, First CRC in Grand Rapids, our neighboring churches, and many others are "mission-shaped" churches. We can be, for we come to often difficult settings with the warmly inviting means of grace.

So when the reporter asked, "Is the church stronger or weaker now?" I replied that institutionally we may be weaker. We don't automatically do or order everything that comes from 2850 Kalamazoo. But I said that we are stronger in our mission locally and internationally. Congregations still give generously to CRC missions and also take part directly in CRWRC, Luke Society, World Wide Christian Schools projects, and in youth service projects.

Ecumenically, we seem to have found our place. The conservative NAPARC (North American Presbyterian Alliance of Churches) does not want us anymore, but we have joined the more diverse WARC (World Alliance of Reformed Churches), which offers a worldwide network for joint work and mutual encouragement.

A valid option

Christian schools, which seemed so strange to evangelical leaders such as Ernest C. Manning [Premier of Alberta for several terms and radio minister] in the '50s, are now seen as a valid option for concerned Christian parents.

And the Reformed worldview expressed in Kuyper's, "There's not an inch of this world of which Jesus does not say 'It's mine'," is more visible at Christian colleges such as Calvin, where faculty and all new students discuss this world view in the required course: Developing a Christian Mind."

Some letter writers to *Christianity Today* even complain that the Reformed view is too prevalent there.

A recovery of the Reformed take on the gospel is indeed good news, and it's fine to see some evidences in the world around us. But I see it best when a 10-year-old takes the bread and cup, proclaiming that Jesus died for her and loves her. That is grace, saving old and young. And that was the major theme of the Reformation: fresh, new life by grace for each one who comes to Jesus.

It's amazing to see that it still happens, right around our communion tables.

Morris Greidanus is a Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich., currently visiting Amsterdam.

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News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

A FRIEND OF MINE — yes, I still have friends — calls my columns little sermons. Well, if he is right, then my sermon today is about two gods: money and oil. The Bible calls the first "filthy lucre" and warns us that "the love of money is the root of all evil." How true.

We have seen a lot of evil coming from the lust of money lately, witness the greedy bosses of Enron — Ken Lay — and WorldCom — our own Edmonton-born Bernard Ebbers, who has distant relatives where I live, more distant now than a year ago.

If money is God, then Alan Greenspan is its pecuniary high priest, whose magic must massage our monetary matters so that no evil befalls them. Last week the oracle spoke. As befitting a divinity, his entire presentation was made available on the "www." Because Greenspan's words were not encouraging to those in the whole wide world who trade in stocks and bonds, the market responded despondently.

WHAT DID HE SAY THAT caused such a negative reaction? That's not always easy to determine. Reading this man's words makes a person cross-eyed, because in order to grasp what he means, you have to read between the lines. And this leads to misunderstandings, of course. I think he criticized his administration when he scolded them for being totally out of whack in its budget estimates. Mr. G. said they are more than $300 billion below their expectations only a year ago, when they optimistically projected prosperity as ongoing for all times and so had not even considered a drop in the stock market.

Washington really believed, I assume, in that book that saw the Dow-Jones hit 36,000 in the next decade. As Paul Krugman of the *New York Times* remarked, they probably have only one digit too much, take your pick which one. Greenspan, in his cautious way, accused the White House of exactly the same tactics that Enron and WorldCom have used: fanciful bookkeeping. Chairman G.: "Under full accrual accounting, the social security program would have shown a substantial deficit last year (instead of the projected surplus)...amounting to many trillions of dollars. Medicare liabilities too are likely (to be) in the trillions of dollars."

IN PLAIN ENGLISH, HIS warning means huge budget shortfalls and, since tax increases are seen as "the original sin" (to stay with my sermon terminology), I predict massive borrowing again and thus higher interest rates — perhaps the real reason why Wall Street values plunged.

Talking about Wall Street, in 1939 World War II proved a boon for the stock market, ending the Great Depression, as governments poured money into the economy, producing tanks and planes and ships and restoring full employment for the first time since 1929. Will the same happen now? Will war on Iraq boost economic activity?

Today's American economy, while not in depression, is certainly not booming either; for example, car manufacturers are so desperate that zero financing is the norm.

SO IS WAR THE ANSWER? No. And here I come to my second god: today with equal force we can say that "the lust for oil is the root of all evil." An Iraq war could prove a disaster for one reason only: oil.

Suppose that anything that can go wrong, will.

Surely Saddam is no dummy. He will not repeat the same strategic mistake of allowing hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their gear to assemble somewhere for an invasion, as he did in 1990-91, so canny Saddam might do a bit of pre-empting himself. Suppose he invades unstable Saudi Arabia, with a quarter of the world's oil reserves? In the last war Saddam blew up almost all of Kuwait's oil wells. If he plays the same dirty trick with the Saudi wells, the consequences for the international economy will be disastrous.

Another scenario: if he has chemical and biological weapons, he could go after Israel. Israel, if it survives, will retaliate, likely with nuclear weapons. Such a response certainly will bring about the "regime change" Bush seeks.

Pakistan too has nuclear bombs. Suppose that Iraq is nuked: extreme Islamists in Pakistan, seeing this as an attack on their religion, might overthrow its president, seen as an American ally, take control of its nuclear arsenal and turn them on India, their arch-enemy. Who knows, this Iraqi gamble could lead to another www — World-Wide-Wrecking.

AND WHY? WHO OR what is the greater danger: Saddam or the food we eat? The secret agents of Osama bin Laden or the secret agents in our beef or eggs or produce?

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, cancer agents have reached alarming levels, such as dioxin — the most potent poison on the planet — PCBs and furans — a word not appearing in my new dictionary, so it must be the newest of diseases. It reminds me of a doctor who told his patient: "The good news is that I will name the condition you have after you. The bad news is that you'll die tomorrow." Hundreds of food samples tested showed the presence of toxic agents eight times out of ten. Combine this with the loss of vitamins and minerals in our produce and the extra additives the U.S. Food and Drug Administration discovered in most of the stuff we eat, then tell me, what is more dangerous: Saddam in Iraq or the food on our plates?

CONCERNING AMERICA'S next crusade: U.S. congressman, Ron Paul, M.D., Republican member from Texas, read 35 interesting questions in the House of Representatives on September 10. Here are some samples. Question 1: "Is it not true that the reason we did not bomb the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War was because we knew they could retaliate?" Question 2: "Is it not true that we are willing to bomb Iraq now because we know it cannot retaliate — which just confirms that there is no real threat?" Question 17: "Are we prepared for possibly thousands of American casualties in a war against a country that does not have the capacity to attack the United States?" Question 27: "Why do the oil company executives strongly support this war if oil is not the real reason we plan to take over Iraq?"

What sort of regime is this that contemplates such folly? Dr. Simon Schama, professor of history at Columbia University in New York, author of two books on Dutch history wrote in the *Guardian*: "That the Bush administration would always prefer prayers to politics, avoiding at all costs debate, both within its ranks and in the public arena, has long been apparent. Silence and secrecy, punctuated with disingenuousness, have consistently been its preferred modus operandi... The United States is currently being run by an oligarchy, conducting its affairs with a plutocratic effrontery which in comparison makes the age of the robber barons in the late 19th century seem a model of capitalistic rectitude."

My comment is that Prof. Schama is only partly correct. America also sees itself as a theocracy: the nation where God rules. Why do the White House people want to attack Iraq? Both the current issue of *Harper's* and the new U.S.A. masterplan give an indication. In the Defense Planning Guidance papers initiated by Dick Cheney when he was Secretary of Defense and by the current man there, Donald Rumsfeld, they conclude that "the United States must not be more powerful or most powerful but that it must be absolutely powerful." (To me only God is absolutely powerful).

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, in order to rule the earth and sky, the U.S.A. must control the Middle East oil fields. Rumsfeld, the secretary of Defense, is in favor of pre-emptive strikes, especially — take note Saddam — with earth-penetrating nuclear weapons capable of destroying "hardened and deeply buried targets" such as command and control bunkers and heavily fortified underground facilities used to build and store weapons of mass destruction.

Bush at the U.N. thought he had killed two birds with one stone: his ultimatum to the U.N. and Saddam sounded at the time like a win-win situation, especially pleasing to his main constituency, the Religious Right, who sees the United Nations as the embodiment of the Anti-Christ, and Saddam his or her willing ally.

It's fascinating and frightening to watch this poker game with the fate of the world at stake. Surely, Saddam is no dummy. By allowing inspectors in, the battle for World Opinion has shifted in his favor. Bush has now, as they say in Las Vegas, a "no-win" game. Any U.S. back-tracking will be seen as an Iraq victory, while a pre-emptive, unilateral attack, however successful, would dramatically worsen U.S. relations with the rest of the world. The poker chips are still up in the air. For now it looks that if heads come up, Hussein wins, if tails, Bush loses.

And with the U.S.A. we all lose, the United Nations, the entire global economy. Because America will be a sore loser, the world will change dramatically overnight. Again. It scares me.

Bert Hielema ran the Terry Fox 10 km in less than an hour in Tweed, skipping church, for once.

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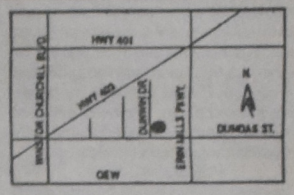

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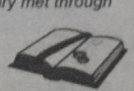
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Birth Announcement

Ed & Teresa Aukema and big brother David welcome with love God's answer to our prayers: a son/brother

Michael Edward John
September 17, 2002
6 lbs 14 oz
the 8th grandson for Katie and the late George Aukema, 3rd grandchild for Joe and Anne Hofstede.
Great-grandparents are: Jenny Hofstede, Klaas and Tina Kamminga.

Wedding:
Congratulations Trudy & Henry from CC staff. Trudy & Henry met through our personal ads.



Wedding

With each believing the other to be
a giver of love, a sharer of sorrow
a bringer of joy and a reason for life.

The children of
Henry Mulder of Essex
and
Trudy Eisen of Renfrew

announce the marriage of their parents
The ceremony took place on Saturday, October 5th, 2002 at 4:00 p.m.at the Hebron Christian Reformed Church in Renfrew. Pastor Fred Heslinga of the Essex Christian Reformed Church officiated.
Correspondence address:
240 Irwin Avenue
Essex, Ontario N8M 2T6

Birthday

90th Birthday
Peter C. Houtman
Congratulations and best wishes for another year of health and strength, in the Lord.
From: Harry and Tine, Joe and Cherie, John and Linda, Margaret and Gordon Hiebert, Bill and Loretta, 15 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren,
Open house October 6 from 2-5 p.m. at Bethel Evangelical Missionary Church, Three Hills. Best wishes only.
Contact address: Box 83
Balzac, AB T0M 0E0

Call *Christian Courier* today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.

Anniversaries

45th Anniversary of
JACOB and ANNA DEKKER
(Bouwsema)
Oct 12, 1957
We thank God for his loving faithfulness over the years and invite you to join us as we celebrate Mom and Dad's 45th anniversary.
Friends and family are invited to an open house in their honor on Sept. 28,2002 at Wellandport Christian School (Wellandport Road & Regional Road 45), Wellandport, from 2-4 p.m.
We love you Mom and Dad (Oma and Opa)!!!

1952 September 25 2002
Westerbork, The Netherlands
"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."
LUKE and FEMMY SCHIPPER
(nee Lubberts)
Celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sept. 25th along with their 9 children, 23 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren. For this, we their children are thankful for God's faithfulness.
Congratulations Mom and Dad.
An open house was held Sept. 28th in Smithville, Ontario.
Luke and Femmy's address is:
2326 Tiber Rd, RR 2,
Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

"Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

HERB and ALICIA ZANTINGH

are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary on on Oct. 5 2002.
Their children are hosting an open house at the Christian Reformed Church, Bloomfield on Oct.5, 2002 from 2 - 4 p.m. Best wishes only please.
Correspondence address:
R.R.2, Bloomfield, ON K0K 1G0

1952 2002
BART and FRANCES HUIZINGA

On October 4, 1952 at the Glen Forest CRC in Toronto, Ontario, Bart and Frances were united in Holy Matrimony by Rev. Brondsema.
To celebrate this wonderful day, their children and grandchildren would like to honor them with your presence at an open house to be held Saturday, October 5/02 from 7:00 p.m to 9:00 p.m. at: Second Christian Reformed Church
1281 Exmouth St. Sarnia, Ontario.
Home address 1071 Jordan Dr.
Sarnia, Ontario N7S 1Y3
"He who finds a good wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" Proverbs 18:22

"A Toi La Gloire"
1942 October 14 2002
Amsterdam Edmonton
With our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren,

NICK and BARTHIE KNOPPERS
(Boon)
celebrate their 60 years of marriage, ministry and caregiving in the service of the Lord.
Correspondence address:
10736 - 43 Street
Edmonton AB T6A 1V9

1952 2002
With praise and thanksgiving to God we

DR. HILBERT and LYNN VANDER PLAAT (nee Adriaanse)

hope to celebrate with their children and grandchildren their 50th wedding anniversary and 50 years in ministry.
An open house will be held at Providence CRC in Beamsville, Ont., 4845 King St. E. On Saturday, October 26th, 2002 from 2 - 4 p.m.
Home address: 5022 Hartwood Ave.
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5
After Nov. 12/02: 304-275 Main St.E.
Grimsby, ON L3M 5N8

Obituaries

April 29, 1926 Sept. 14, 2002
Ruinen, Brampton
The Netherlands Ontario

HELEN JANSSEN
(nee Timmerman)

With her family by her side on September 14th, 2002, our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Helen Janssen went peacefully home to the Lord.
She was the beloved wife of Henk for 54 years. Cherished mother of Harry & Sharon, Rick & Loralee, Ina & Bob, Hennie & Dennis, John & Jacqueline, William & Cathy.
Grandmother to 12 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Sister of Margje Keizer (Timmerman) from Holland

Service was held at the Second Christian Reformed Church in Brampton. Private family burial was held at Brampton Memorial Gardens.
Correspondence address:
65 Rosedale Avenue
Brampton ON L6X 1K4

On Sept. 4th, 2002, the Lord in His wisdom and at His time took to Himself our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

PIETER POORTINGA
at the age of 98.
"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21

Husband of Elisabeth Steenhuis, predeceased by his first wife, Iekje Renkema (1945). Father of:
Andy & Rose - *Woodstock*
Egbert (†) & Olivia - *Burlington*
Kathy Oussoren (†) - *St. Catharines*
Pier & Ginny - *Belle River*
Henk & Joanne - *St. Catharines*
Chris & Connie - *Townsend*
Patricia & Greg Haskell - *Hagersville*
And 28 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. Predeceased by two daughters-in-law: Reta Poortinga (van Brakel, 1996) and Anna Poortinga (Haveman 1990) and great-grandson, Michael, 1991.
Corresponding address:
E. Poortinga, Apt.18 Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N3

Obituaries

BINNERT (Bart) VANDERDUIM

passed away peacefully at the Freeport Health Center of Grandriver Hospital in Kitchener, Ontario on Wednesday, August 15, 2002, at the age of 83. Beloved husband of Sandra (Saakje) Vanderzee, loving father of Joanna Kooistra and husband, Clare Kooistra, proud and loving grandfather of Remkes Kooistra, (Jr.), and Rhys Kooistra. Bert is also survived by his brother Henk VanderDuim of Strathroy, sisters Helen Neef of St. Thomas, Ontario and Anna Visscher of the Netherlands.
A service celebrating Bert's life was held on August 20, 2002, at the Chapel in Luther Village in Waterlob, Ontario. Donations on Bert's behalf may be made to the Canadian Cancer society.

May 5, 1917 Sept 6, 2002

IRENE ANN BULTHUIS

of Hamilton, Ontario, after a short illness passed away peacefully into the hands of her Lord. Mom has joined her husband Gerrit (1971) and her son Jack (1992).
Mom's foundation was:
"I look to the Lord for help at all times, and he rescues me from danger."
Ps. 25:15
Mom will be deeply missed by:
Henry & Irene - *Victoria, BC*
Jerry & Shirley - *Hamilton, Ont.*
Peter & Ria - *Grimsby, Ont.*
and her grandchildren:
David (Jennifer), Dwayne (Tracy), Michelle, Wendy, Jennifer (Gary), Mike, Adele, Steve, Eric and Kristel.
and her great-grandchildren:
Jordan, Zachary, Tanner, Darien, Jackson, Caleb and Sarah.
Correspondence: Jerry Bulthuis
150 Lynbrook Dr
Hamilton, ON L9C 2K9

April 4, 1933 September 5, 2002
Stiens Thunder Bay
The Netherlands Ontario

DIRK KOK

"The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" Ps.27:1,2

Mr. Dirk Kok passed away peacefully Thursday, September 5 2002, at the age of 69.
Dearly loved by his family;
wife of 44 years, Netty (Heerema) and their children Winnie & Ron Salo, Lou & Sandra Kok, Harvey & Joanne Kok, Douglas & Pamela Kok, Greg & Penny Kok as well as 11 grandchildren. Dirk is also survived by his mother Mrs. Jantje Kok, brother Max & Ada Kok, sister Teena & Henry Ryzebol and sister Briena Meems. Predeceased by his father Mr. Louis Kok in 1985.
Correspondence Address:
Mrs. Netty Kok, 5 Garrard Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7A 7A1

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Contact: Fred Vanderheide
Ph: (519)743-6673
E-mail: vdheide@golgen.net

Or Claire Elgersma
Ph: (519)578-2508
E-mail:
rayelgersma@sympatico.ca

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Covenant Christian Reformed Church in **Winnipeg, Manitoba**, is looking for an Associate Pastor. The primary role, especially in the first year, is to strengthen the ministry to youth and establish the ministry to young adults. Some preaching will be expected, and once the ministry to youth and young adults is established, assisting the Senior Pastor in a variety of tasks, as agreed upon by Council.
For a complete job description or to apply, please contact:
Tina Brakkel
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Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G 2K3
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Staffing Committee Chair. Bill Helmus
E-mail: helmus@telus.net

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519-357-1296 or e-mail jaysuth@hotmail.com
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- Outreach Ministry,
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Please direct inquiries and résumés to:

Clarkson Christian Reformed Church
1880 Lakeshore Road West
Mississauga, Ontario L5J 1J8
ATTENTION: Ministry Staffing
E mail: mail@clarksoncrc.on.ca

For a closer look at our church, surf over to our Web site at **www.clarksoncrc.on.ca**

Dordt College

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Social Work
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Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail:
vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site:
www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

Miscellaneous

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Pay scale: $17.50 - $19.00 per hr., depending on experience and expertise.
Persons interested should contact Gary Postma at **ocfaa@mail.com** in order to receive job description and additional information.
Application deadline: Oct 25. We hope to interview candidates on Nov 8.

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Administrator Search Committee c/o Don Dam
5 Garden Drive
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 3X8
phone: 905-945-8690 email: dondam@westbrooksystems.com

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items Appearing in this column are run free of charge if they adveritse an admission free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Oct 5,6	Bethel CRC of **Saskatoon**, **Saskatchewan** 50th anniversary. Contact Betty Veltkamp, 302-510 th Av N. Saskatoon, SK S7K 2R2 or email: bveltkamp@sasktel.net
Oct 5,6	Blyth CRC, **Blyth**, Ontario will celebrate its **40th anniversary**. Breakfast & social Oct. 5, commemorative worship services, Oct. 6. See this issue for more info.
Oct. 11	Experimental Concert, 8 pm **St. Catharines**, St. Denis Roman Cath. Church. See ad this issue
Oct 12	Experimental Concert, 8 pm. **Brampton**, Emmanuel CRC. See ad
Oct 18	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Our Lady Immaculate R. Cath. Church. **Guelph**. See ad.
Oct 19	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Rehoboth United Ref. Church, **Hamilton**
Oct.19	Organ, Piano, and Flute concert series, **Bowmanville**, Rehoboth CRC. See ad this issue.
Oct.19	**A Day of Encouragement** and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**. Theme: "Go out in Joy!" Featuring 50 workshops including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Cost: $45. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or Diaconal Ministries at 905-336-2920 or at www.diaconalministries.com.
Oct.18,19 20	Immanuel Christian School, **Oshawa**, Ont. **40th Anniversary**. For event info, contact Trudy Bouma at 905-623-1103 or email: r.bouma@sympatico.ca
Oct 19,20	First CRC of **Chilliwack B.C. 50th** anniversary. For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail: pjonda@telus.net
Oct 24	Organ, Piano and Flute Concert, **Owen Sound** , Canadian Ref. Church. For more info, contact The Music Group at (905) 631-1929
Oct 25	Organ, Piano and Flute Concert, **Burlington**, Ebenezer Canadian Ref. Church. For Info: (905) 631-1929
Oct 26	**CRWRC 40th Anniversary Celebration** at 7:30 PM at **Brampton** 2nd CRC, Steeles Ave(W). Presentations by DRS, Relief and Development. Please join us! Call Peter at 905-453-5271
Oct 26	**Organ**, **Piano** and **Flute** concert, **York** CRC. For more info, contact The Music Group at (905) 631-1929
Oct 26	**CLAC 50th Anniversary Celebration**. Dr. Calvin Seerveld keynote speaker, **Hamilton** District Christian High. For further information, call Pauline at **905-945-1500.**
Oct 26	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Grace Reformed Church, 514 George St., **Dunnville**. Freewill offering. (519) 637-4357
Oct 26,27	Rehoboth CRC, **Niagara Falls, 50th Anniversary** weekend of praise, fellowship. For more information, call Michael Havinga 905-358-3534 or mhavinga@becon.org
Nov 1	**Christian Festival Concert** under the direction of Leendart Kooij in Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto** $28/$21/$16. Call 416-636-9779
Nov5	The Annual **2002 Church & the Law Seminar** will be held on Tues., Nov. 5th, 2002 at Bramalea Baptist Church, **Bramalea** located in Greater Toronto. This year's theme is **"Essential Legal Issues for Churches & Religious Charities"**. Registration forms are available at www.charitylaw.ca and the host, Carter & Associates, ph: (519) 942-0001, Fax: (519) 942-0300 or email: seminars@charitylaw.ca.
Nov 8	**Music to Delight**: A program of music with soprano soloist Renée Stalenhoef, organist Ian Sadler, the Harbouraires from Goderich, the Men of Note from Clinton, at **Clinton** CRC, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $10, Children $5. For information, call 519-482-5372.
Nov 9	The **Lighthouse Community Centre** Annual International Dinner and **Silent Auction**, at Buffet King, 410 & Warden, **Scarborough.** Call The Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 for reservations.
Nov 16	**Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham. Also featuring Soloist Elisabeth Enzlin and Chatham-Kent Male Chorus. Sponsored by Chatham Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (519) 352-4980**
Nov 9	**Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools** (OACS) **50th** Anniversary, *Celebrating Pioneers and Visionaries*, **Oakville** Conference Centre. Contact the OACS at 905-648-2100 or oacs@oacs.org to reserve your place.
Nov 16	**Liberation Choir**, Fall tour. 8 p.m. Ebenezer Christian Ref. Church, **Trenton** See Ad.
Nov 30 Dec. 1	**Tillsonburg CRC 25th Anniversary**. For event info contact Marg Kriense Lokker 519-877-2519 or e-mail john.lokker@sympatico.ca
Dec 7	**Handel's Messiah** performed by the Arcady Singers & Orchestra, 7:30 p.m. Willowdale CRC, 70 Hilda Av. **Willowdale**, ON Tickets $15 & $10. For info and tickets call Te Deum Music at 416-250-7702.
Jan 17	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First CRC, 181 Charlton Ave, **Hamilton**. Sponsored by World Wide Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (905) 765-5623
Jan 18	**Concert of Sacred Music** by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, 130 Scugog St., **Bowmanville**. Freewill offering (519) 637-4357

Liberation Choir
Fall Concert Series 2002

Director: Willem van Suijdam
Organ: Ian Sadler

Admission: $10.00

Friday, October 18 at 8:00 pm, Guelph
Church of Our Lady RC, 28 Norfolk St.

Saturday, October 19 at 8:00 pm, Hamilton
Rehoboth United Reformed Church, 77 Glancaster Road

Saturday, November 16 at 7:30 pm, Trenton
Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church, 18 FourthAvenue

Tickets are available at the door or from choir members in advance.

All tickets are general admission. Arrive early as seating is on a first come, first served basis.
For more information, please contact The Music Group at (905) 631-1929 or paula@organs.ca

Experimental Concerts

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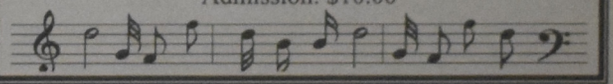
"Anonymous"

Rick VanderLinden, organ-synthesizer, piano
Willem van Suijdam, organ-synthesizer
Bob Shields, guitar
Meredith Nelson, bass
Mark Inneo, drums

Friday, October 11 at 8:00 pm, St. Catharines
St. Denis Roman Catholic Church, 230 Lake Street

Saturday, October 12 at 8:00 pm, Brampton
Immanuel Christian Ref. Church, 63 Church Street

Admission: $10.00



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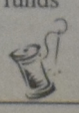

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News

Canadian Council of Churches leader presided over five years of change

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO – The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) has grown and changed considerably during Janet Somerville's five years as its general secretary. Once thought of as a theologically liberal group, CCC now includes the Roman Catholic church and several Orthodox denominations.

Somerville completed her five-year term as general secretary Sept. 30, and has now retired from CCC. Reflecting on the changes the council has seen, Somerville says that years ago, "when people looked at CCC, they tended to think that only theological liberals need apply." But not now, she asserts. Six Orthodox denominations have now joined the council: the Armenian, Coptic, Ukrainian, Greek, and Ethiopian Orthodox churches, as well as the Orthodox Church of America. "Theological liberalism is not their thing," says Somerville.

COURTESY CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

COURTESY KAREN HAMILTON

Retiring Canadian Council of Churches general secretary Janet Somerville (left) and her successor, Karen Hamilton (right).

Having a variety of churches join CCC has added "a marvelous dimension," says Somerville. "We're almost as varied as Canada. It has been an exhilarating way to be close to Canada's newness in that regard." CCC "takes very seriously the distinctiveness of each church tradition."

But CCC member churches are facing many challenges, notes Somerville. Its largest member churches – the Roman Catholic, United, Anglican and Presbyterian churches – "are just wracked over the crisis over residential schools," she asserts. Those churches are "extremely busy and burdened with this. [It is] a huge crisis financially."

Acute financial crisis

This crisis also affects the work of CCC, because those four mainline churches are unable to increase givings to the council. "There's a pretty acute financial challenge" to CCC, admits Somerville. The council "may have to change our culture in that regard."

Up until now, CCC has been funded by voluntary grants given to it by its member denominations. But in the future, CCC may have to do fund-raising, says Somerville.

Other challenges are also facing CCC's member denominations, explains Somerville. "The context is one for stormy times for institutional churches. Churches are shrinking. Many churches are aging." Besides that, the mainstream media frequently shows "the weakest side in the life of clergy."

But rather than posing obstacles, such challenges can be good for the Church, suggests Somerville. "Going through hard times like this is very broadening."

To accommodate a wider range of churches, CCC has made a policy shift from following majority rule to working toward a consensus among its members explains Somerville. "We only undertake actions as a council when we have a consensus.... That's a shock to those used to majority votes."

But she notes that the Christian Reformed Churches of Canada and the Roman Catholic Church "have often said they would not have joined" CCC if the consensus model had not been adopted. But one result of this approach is "there are fewer actions and fewer resolutions" initiated by CCC.

Quality of being together

As she looks back on her five years leading CCC, Somerville says, "the word 'accomplishments' does not spring to mind. It's the quality of being together that speaks to my heart more than projects."

Even so, certain projects have made a significant impact over the last few years. One is the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI), which ran from 1997 to 2000. "That was a very special effort" run by CCC's Commission on Justice and Peace, explains Somerville. The theme of restoring land to Canada's aboriginals was one of CEJI's focuses which "I was most moved by," she says. She also appreciated CEJI's emphasis on canceling the debts of developing countries to the Western world.

Valuable books

Recently, CCC's Commission on Faith and Witness has published two valuable books: *Holy Time* – dealing with reflection – and *Together in Christ: The Hope and Promise of Christian Marriage.* The latter book, published in 2000, was based on a survey and dialogue on the theology of marriage. Intended as a pastoral aid and an ecumenical resource on Christian marriage, the book contains an introductory chapter celebrating the common ground shared by the participating churches, and highlighting the areas of significant difference, explains CCC on its website.

The Ecumenical Healthcare Network is another significant ongoing project of CCC, which has been addressing healthcare challenges in Canada. It has been in dialogue with the Canadian government's Romanow Commission — which is currently examining ways to restructure and improve Canada's healthcare system.

Looking ahead, CCC's Commission on Faith and Witness will be sponsoring what Somerville calls "a national catch-up session" in November, which will examine bilateral dialogues which have been going on between some denominations, such as the Anglicans and Lutherans. Those two denominations recently agreed to have "full communion" with each other. The November session will "help us understand what is the temperature of the bilateral dialogues," says Somerville.

Anguished conversations

Another issue "preoccupying everybody is the larger question of ... sliding back into thinking of war as glorious and necessary," says Somerville, pointing to recent developments in the Middle East. There have been "anguished conversations" within CCC's member churches about how they should speak out on those issues.

Last May, CCC's Commission on Faith and Witness published the document *Redeemed by violence? Who are we becoming?* The governing board of CCC devoted a full day of its spring meeting last May to learning, reflecting and sharing on the times in which we live, times marked particularly by the agonies of the Middle East and by the seemingly endless "war on terror" launched by the United States following the disasters of September 11, 2001, in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, reports CCC.

Somerville is being flexible about her personal plans following her retirement from CCC. She says she is open to responding to requests from churches for her assistance.

Taking over from Somerville as CCC's new general secretary is Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, who began her term of office on October 1. Hamilton is an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada, serving since 1995 in mid-town Toronto at St. James-Bond United Church. She has a strong and tested commitment to ecumenism and to inter-faith dialogue, says CCC on its website. She has been active in encouraging ecumenical institutions in her native city of Toronto, and is a founding member of the emerging Greater Toronto Council of Christian Churches.

News Digest

A bad career move

LOS ANGELES, California (Reuters) – If there were a "Bad Career Move" award for car thieves, police in Los Angeles say they have a candidate — a man who tried to steal a minivan with a judo team inside.

The co-ed team from Florida International University of Miami was in town to teach a self-defence course and were taking a tour of Hollywood before heading to the airport recently when they crossed paths with the carjacker at a gas station close to where he had carjacked a Nissan minutes earlier.

The suspect apparently was trying to ditch the first vehicle and steal another when he approached one of the students, police said. He demanded money and got into a scuffle with one judo student. The other students piled on and subdued him in a body hold until police arrived.

Vacation of a lifetime

MIAMI, Florida (Reuters) – Israel Haimowitz made a deal with his doctor 15 years ago — get me to 100 and I'll buy you a European vacation.

Recently, Haimowitz celebrated his 100th birthday. So Dr. Robert Drimmer and his wife are looking forward to a trip to London next summer.

"I hate to take his money," Drimmer said, but Haimowitz "would be mad if I didn't go."

Haimowitz, a retired furniture salesman living in Miami, said it's the least he can do. "To get a doctor down here that's considerate of his patients is difficult," Haimowitz said. He credits his longevity and health to drinking two ounces of cognac daily, along with eating five Danish butter cookies.

Stolen car wrong color

EAST RAND, South Africa (Ananova) – South African carjackers have returned a woman's car for being the wrong color and told her how to get home. The 41-year-old and her two daughters had just arrived home when three men approached them. East Rand police say one threatened them with a knife and forced them into the back of her white Volvo.

They then drove to northeastern Johannesburg, where they met up with another man who appeared to be unhappy with the color of the car. After stealing the victim's mobile phone and jewelry they then returned her car keys and gave her directions when she said she didn't know how to get home.